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GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

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THE

LIFE OF WESLEY;

AND THE

RISE AND PROGRESS

Methodism.

B2363

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POET LAUREATE,

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Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted; nor to find talk and discourse: but to weigh and consider.

LORD BACON.

THE SECOND EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE

LIFE OF WESLEY.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEATH OF MRS. WESLEY. — WESLEY'S SISTERS. — WESLEY AT EPWORTH.

METHODISM had now taken root in the land. Meeting-houses had been erected in various parts of the kingdom, and settled, not upon trustees, (which would have destroyed the unity of Wesley's scheme, by making the preachers dependent upon the people, as among the Dissenters,) but upon himself, the acknowledged head and sole director of the society which he had raised and organised. Funds were provided by a financial regulation so well devised, that the revenues would increase in exact proportion to the increase of the members. Assistant preachers were ready, in any number that might be required, whose zeal and activity compensated, in no slight degree, for their want of learning; and whose inferiority of rank and education disposed them to look up to Mr. Wesley with deference as well as respect, and fitted them for the privations which they were to endure, and the company with which they were to associate. A system of minute inspection had been established, which was at once so contrived as to gratify

every individual, by giving him a sense of his own importance, and to give the preacher the most perfect knowledge of those who were under his charge. No confession of faith was required from any person who desired to become a member: in this Wesley displayed that consummate prudence which distinguished him whenever he was not led astray by some darling opinion. The door was thus left open to the orthodox of all descriptions, Churchmen or Dissenters, Baptists or Pædobaptists, Presbyterians or Independents, Calvinists or Arminians; no profession, no sacrifice of any kind was exacted. The person who joined the new society was not expected to separate himself from the community to which he previously belonged. He was only called upon to renounce his vices, and follies which are near a-kin to them. Like the Free-mason, he acquired by his initiation new connections and imaginary consequence; but unlike the Free-mason, he derived a real and direct benefit from the change which in most instances was operated in the habits and moral nature of the proselytes.

To this stage Methodism had advanced when Wesley lost his mother, in a good old age, ready and willing to depart. Arriving in London from one of his circuits, he found her "on the borders of eternity; but she had no doubt or fear, nor any desire but, as soon as God should call, to depart and to be with Christ." On the third day after his arrival, he perceived that her change was near. "I sate down," he says, "on the bed-side. She

was in her last conflict, unable to speak, but I believe quite sensible. He look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed upward, while we commended her soul to God. From three to four the silver cord was losing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech: 'Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'" He performed the funeral service himself, and thus feelingly describes it: "Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together, about five in the afternoon I committed to the earth the body of my mother to sleep with her fathers. The portion of Scripture from which I afterwards spoke was, *I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see, on this side * eternity."

* The epitaph which her sons placed upon her tomb-stone is remarkable. Instead of noticing the virtues of so extraordinary and exemplary a woman, they chose to record what they were pleased to call her conversion, and to represent her as if she had lived in ignorance of real Christianity during the life of her excellent husband.

This is the inscription: —

Here lies the body of Mrs. Susannah Wesley, the youngest and last surviving daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley.

Mrs. Wesley had had her share of sorrow. During her husband's life she had struggled with narrow circumstances, and at his death she was left dependent upon her children. Of nineteen children she had wept over the early graves of far the greater number: she had survived her son Samuel, and she had the keener anguish of seeing two of her daughters unhappy, and perhaps of foreseeing the unhappiness of the third; an unhappiness the more to be deplored, because it was not altogether undeserved.

Among Wesley's pupils at Lincoln was a young man, by name Hall, of good person, considerable talents, and manners which were in a high degree

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In sure and steadfast hope to rise
And claim her mansion in the skies,
A Christian here her flesh laid down,
The cross exchanging for a crown.

True daughter of affliction she,
Inured to pain and misery,
Mourn'd a long night of griefs and fears,
A legal night of seventy years.

The Father then reveal'd his Son,
Him in the broken bread made known,
She knew and felt her sins forgiven,
And found the earnest of her Heaven.

Meet for the fellowship above,
She heard the call, "Arise, my Love!"
I come, her dying looks replied,
And lamb-like as her Lord she died.

The third stanza alludes to her persuasion that she had received an assurance of the forgiveness of her sins at the moment when her son-in-law Hall was administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to her. — See vol. i. p. 291.

prepossessing, to those who did not see beneath the surface of such things. Wesley was much attached to him; he thought him humble and teachable, and in all manner of conversation holy and unblameable. There were indeed parts of his conduct which might have led a wary man to suspect either his sanity or his sincerity; but the tutor was too sincere himself, and too enthusiastic, to entertain the suspicion which some of his extravagancies might justly have excited. He considered them as "starts of thought which were not of God, though they at first appeared to be;" and was satisfied, because the young man "was easily convinced, and his imaginations died away." Samuel formed a truer judgement. "I never liked the man," says he, "from the first time I saw him. His smoothness never suited my roughness. He appeared always to dread me as a wit and a jester: this with me is a sure sign of guilt and hypocrisy. He never could meet my eye in full light. Conscious that there was something foul at bottom, he was afraid I should see it, if I looked keenly into his eye." John, however, took him to his bosom. He became a visitor at Epworth, won the affections of the youngest sister Kezia, obtained her promise to marry him, fixed the day, and then, and not till then, communicated the matter to her brother and her parents, affirming vehemently that "the thing was of God; that he was certain it was God's will; God had revealed to him that he must marry, and that Kezia was the very person." Enthusiastic as Wesley himself was, the declaration startled him,

and the more so, because nothing could be more opposite to some of Hall's former extravagancies. Writing to him many years afterwards, when he had thrown off all restraints of outward decency, he says, "Hence I date your fall. Here were several faults in one. You leaned altogether to your own understanding, not consulting either me, who was then the guide of your soul, or the parents of your intended wife, till you had settled the whole affair. And while you followed the voice of Nature, you said it was the voice of God."

In spite, however, of the ominous fanaticism or impudent hypocrisy which Mr. Hall had manifested, neither Wesley nor the parents attempted to oppose the match: it was an advantageous one, and the girl's affections were too deeply engaged. But to the utter astonishment of all parties, in the course of a few days, Mr. Hall changed his mind, and pretending, with blasphemous effrontery, that the Almighty had changed His, declared that a second revelation had countermanded the first, and instructed him to marry not her, but her sister Martha. The family, and especially the brothers, opposed this infamous proposal with proper indignation; and Charles addressed a poem * to

* TO MISS MARTHA WESLEY.

When want, and pain, and death, besiege our gate,
And every solemn moment teems with fate,
While clouds and darkness fill the space between,
Perplex th' event, and shade the folded scene,
In humble silence wait th' unuttered voice,
Suspend thy will, and check thy forward choice;

the new object of his choice, which must have stung her like a scorpion whenever the recollection

Yet, wisely fearful, for th' event prepare,
And learn the dictates of a brother's care.
How fierce thy conflict, how severe thy flight!
When hell assails the foremost sons of light!
When he, who long in virtue's paths had trod,
Deaf to the voice of conscience and of God,
Drops the fair mask, proves traitor to his vow,
And thou the temptress, and the tempted thou!
Prepare thee then to meet th' infernal war,
And dare beyond what woman knows to dare;
Guard each avenue to thy flutt'ring heart,
And act the sister's and the Christian's part.
Heav'n is the guard of virtue; scorn to yield,
When screen'd by Heav'n's impenetrable shield:
Secure in this, defy th' impending storm,
Tho' Satan tempt thee in an angel's form.
And oh! I see the fiery trial near:
I see the saint, in all his forms, appear!
By nature, by religion taught to please,
With conquest flush'd, and obstinate to press,
He lists his virtues in the cause of hell,
Heav'n with celestial arms, presumes t' assail,
To veil, with semblance fair, the fiend within,
And make his God subservient to his sin!
Trembling I hear his horrid vows renewed,
I see him come, by Delia's groans pursued;
Poor injur'd Delia! all her groans are vain!
Or he denies, or list'ning, mocks her pain,
What tho' her eyes with ceaseless tears o'erflow,
Her bosom heave with agonising woe!
What tho' the horror of his falsehood near;
Tear up her faith, and plunge her in despair!
Yet, can he think (so blind to Heav'n's decree,
And the sure fate of cursed apostacy)
Soon as he tells the secret of his breast,
And puts the angel off, and stands confess'd;
When love, and grief, and shame, and anguish meet,
To make his crimes and Delia's wrongs complete,
That then the injur'd maid will cease to grieve,
Behold him in a sister's arms — and live?
Mistaken wretch! by thy unkindness hurl'd
From ease, from love, from thee, and from the world,

of its just severity recurred to her in after-life. But these remonstrances were of no avail, for Hall had won her affections also. "This last error," says Wesley, "was far worse than the first. But you was now quite above conviction. So, in spite of her poor astonished parent, of her brothers, of all your vows and promises, you jilted the younger and married the elder sister. The other, who had honoured you as an angel from heaven, and still loved you much too well, (for you had stolen her heart from the God of her youth,) refused to be comforted: she fell into a lingering illness, which terminated in her death. And doth not her blood still cry unto God from the earth? Surely it is upon your head."

Mr. Wesley died before the marriage: it is not to be believed that, under such circumstances, he

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Soon must she land on that immortal shore,
Where falsehood never can torment her more;
There all her suff'rings, all her sorrows cease,
Nor saints turn devils there to vex her peace.
Yet hope not then, all specious as thou art,
To taint, with impious vows, her sister's heart;
With proffer'd worlds her honest soul to move,
Or tempt her virtue to incestuous love.
No! wert thou as thou wast! did Heav'n's first rays
Beam on thy soul, and all the godhead blaze!
Sooner shall sweet oblivion set us free
From friendship, love, thy perfidy and thee:
Sooner shall light in league with darkness join,
Virtue and vice, and heav'n and hell combine,
Than her pure soul consent to mix with thine;
To share thy sin, adopt thy perjury,
And damn herself to be reveng'd on thee;
To load her conscience with a sister's blood,
The guilt of incest, and the curse of God!

would ever have consented to it; and it is possible that his strong and solemn prohibition might have deterred his daughter from so criminal an union. Samuel observed bitterly of this fatal connection: "I am sure I may well say of that marriage, it will not, cannot come to good." And he proposed that Kezia should live with him, in the hope that it might save her from "discontent perhaps, or from a worse passion." But, like most of her family, this injured girl possessed a lofty spirit. She subdued her resentment, and submitted with so much apparent resignation to the wrong which she had received, that she accompanied the foul hypocrite and his wife to his curacy. But it consumed her by the slow operation of a settled grief. Charles thus describes her welcome release in a letter to John: "Yesterday morning sister Kezzy died in the Lord Jesus. He finished his work, and cut it short in mercy. Full of thankfulness, resignation, and love, without pain or trouble, she commended her spirit into the hands of Jesus, and fell asleep."

Till this time John Wesley believed that Mr. Hall was, "without all question, filled with faith and the love of God, so that in all England," he said, "he knew not his fellow." He thought him a pattern of lowliness, meekness, seriousness, and continual advertence to the presence of God, and, above all, of self-denial in every kind, and of suffering all things with joyfulness. "But now," he says, "there was a worm at the root of the gourd." For about two years after his marriage there was no apparent change in his conduct; his wife then

began to receive her proper punishment from the caprice and asperity of his temper. After a while he seemed to recover his self-command, but soon again he betrayed a hasty and contemptuous disposition: from having been the humble and devoted disciple of the Wesleys, he contracted gradually a dislike towards them, and at length broke off all intercourse with them, public or private, because they would not, in conformity to his advice, renounce their connection with the Church of England. He had now his own followers, whom he taught first to disregard the ordinances of religion, then to despise them, and speak of them with contempt. He began to teach that there was "no resurrection of the body, no general judgement, no Hell, no worm that never dieth, no fire that never shall be quenched." His conduct was now conformable to his principles, if indeed the principles had not grown out of a determined propensity for vice and profligacy. Wesley addressed an expostulatory letter to him, in which he recapitulated, step by step, his progress in degradation. After stating to him certain facts, which proved the licentiousness of his life, he concluded thus: "And now you know not that you have done any thing amiss! You can eat, and drink, and be merry! You are every day engaged with variety of company, and frequent the coffee-houses! Alas, my brother, what is this! How are you above measure hardened by the deceitfulness of sin! Do you remember the story of Santon Barsisa? I pray God your last end may not be like his! Oh how have

you grieved the Spirit of God! Return to him with weeping, fasting, and mourning! You are in the very belly of Hell; only the pit hath not yet shut its mouth upon you. Arise, thou sleeper, and call upon thy God! Perhaps He may yet be found. Because He yet bears with me, I cannot despair for *you*. But you have not a moment to lose. May God this instant strike you to the heart, that you may feel His wrath abiding on you, and have no rest in your bones by reason of your sin, till all your iniquities are done away."

Soon after he had written this letter, which was done more for the purpose of delivering his own soul, as he says, than with any reasonable hope of impressing a man so far gone in depravity, Wesley, in the course of his travelling, came to Mr. Hall's house, at Salisbury, and was let in, though orders had been given that he should not be admitted. Hall left the room as soon as he entered, sent a message to him that he should quit the house, and presently turned his wife out of doors also. Having now thrown off all restraint and all regard to decency, he publicly and privately recommended polygamy as comformable to nature, preached in its defence, and practised as he preached. Soon he laid aside all pretensions to religion, professed himself an infidel, and led for many years the life of an adventurer and a profligate, at home and abroad; acting sometimes as a physician, sometimes as a priest, and assuming any character according to the humour or the convenience of the day. Wesley thought that this unhappy man would

never have thus wholly abandoned himself to these flagitious propensities, if the Moravians had not withdrawn him from his influence, and therefore he judged them to be accountable for his perdition. He seems to have felt no misgiving that he himself might have been the cause; that Hall might have continued to walk uprightly if he had kept the common path; and that nothing could be more dangerous to a vain and headstrong man of a heated fancy, than the notion that he had attained to Christian perfection, and felt in himself the manifestations of the Spirit. Weary of this life at last, after many years, and awakened to a sense of its guilt as well as its vanity, he returned to England in his old age, resumed his clerical functions, and appears to have been received by his wife. Wesley was satisfied that his contrition was real, and hastened to visit him upon his death-bed; but it was too late. "I came," he says, "just time enough not to see, but to bury poor Mr. Hall, my brother-in-law, who died, I trust, in peace, for God had given him deep repentance. Such another monument of divine mercy, considering how low he had fallen, and from what height of holiness, I have not seen, no, not in seventy years! I had designed to visit him in the morning, but he did not stay for my coming. It is enough if, after all his wanderings, we meet again in Abraham's bosom." Mrs. Hall bore her fate with resignation, and with an inward consciousness that her punishment was not heavier than her fault: — that fault excepted, the course of her life was exemplary, and she lived

to be the last survivor of a family whose years were protracted far beyond the ordinary age of man.

Mehetabel, her sister, had a life of more unmingled affliction. In the spring freshness of youth and hope, her affections were engaged by one who, in point of abilities and situation, might have been a suitable husband; some circumstances, however, occasioned a disagreement with her father, the match was broken off, and Hetty committed a fatal error, which many women have committed in their just but blind resentment—she married the first person who offered. This was a man in no desirable rank of life, of coarse mind and manners, inferior to herself in education and in intellect, and every way unworthy of a woman whose equal in all things it would have been difficult to find. For her person was more than commonly pleasing, her disposition gentle and affectionate, her principles those which arm the heart either for prosperous or adverse fortune, her talents remarkable, and her attainments beyond what are ordinarily permitted to women, even those who are the most highly educated. Duty in her had produced so much affection towards the miserable creature whom she had made her husband, that the brutal profligacy of his conduct almost broke her heart. Under such feelings, and at a time when she believed and hoped that she should soon be at peace in the grave, she composed this Epitaph for herself:—

Destined while living to sustain
An equal share of grief and pain,
All various ills of human race
Within this breast had once a place.

Without complaint she learn'd to bear
A living death, a long despair;
Till hard oppressed by adverse fate,
O'ercharged, she sank beneath the weight,
And to this peaceful tomb retired,
So much esteem'd, so long desired.
The painful mortal conflict's o'er;
A broken heart can bleed no more.

From that illness, however, she recovered, so far as to linger on for many years, living to find in religion the consolation which she needed, and which nothing else can bestow. The state of her mind is beautifully expressed in the first letter which she ever addressed to John upon the subject. "Some years ago," she says, "I told my brother Charles I could not be of his way of thinking then, but that if ever I was, I would as freely own it. After I was convinced of sin, and of your opinion, as far as I had examined your principles, I still forbore declaring my sentiments so openly as I had inclination to do, fearing I should relapse into my former state. When I was delivered from this fear, and had a blessed hope that he who had begun would finish his work, I never confessed, so fully as I ought, how entirely I was of your mind; because I was taxed with insincerity and hypocrisy whenever I opened my mouth in favour of religion, or owned how great things God had done for me. This discouraged me utterly, and prevented me from making my change as public as my folly and vanity had formerly been. But now my health is gone, I cannot be easy without declaring that I have long desired to know but one thing, that is

Jesus Christ, and him crucified; and this desire prevails above all others. And though I am cut off from all human help or ministry, I am not without assistance; though I have no spiritual friend, nor ever had one yet, except perhaps once in a year or two, when I have seen one of my brothers, or some other religious person, by stealth; yet (no thanks to me) I am enabled to seek Him still, and to be satisfied with nothing less than God, in whose presence I affirm this truth. I dare not desire health, only patience, resignation, and the spirit of an healthful mind. I have been so long weak, that I know not how long my trial may last; but I have a firm persuasion, and blessed hope, (though no full assurance,) that, in the country I am going to, I shall not sing Hallelujah, and holy, holy, holy, without company, as I have done in this. Dear brother, I am unused to speak or write on these things: I only speak my plain thoughts as they occur. Adieu! If you have time from better business to send a line to Stanmore, so great a comfort would be as welcome as it is wanted."

She lived eight years after this letter was written, bearing her sufferings with patience and pious hope. Charles was with her in her last illness. He says in his journal, "Prayed by my sister Wright, a gracious, tender, trembling soul; a bruised reed, which the Lord will not break." "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." From these words he preached her

funeral sermon, with a feeling which brought him into "sweet fellowship with the departed;" and he says, that all who were present seemed to partake both of his sorrow and his joy.

Another of the sisters married a clergyman by name Whitelamb, who had been John's pupil at Oxford, was beholden to the family* during his stay at college, and obtained the living of Wroote after his father-in-law's death. John, in the beginning of his regular itinerancy, on his way back from Newcastle, after his first appearance in that town, came to Epworth. Many years had elapsed since he had been in his native place, and not knowing whether there were any persons left in it who would not be ashamed of his acquaintance, he went to an inn, where, however, he was soon found out by an old servant of his father's. The next day being Sunday, he called upon the curate. Mr. Romley, and offered to assist him either by preaching or reading prayers; but his assistance was refused, and the use of the pulpit was denied him. A rumour, however, prevailed, that he was to preach in the afternoon; the church was filled in consequence, and a sermon was delivered upon the evils of enthusiasm, to which Wesley listened with his characteristic composure. But when the sermon was over, his companion gave notice, as the

* Writing to his brother Samuel in 1732, Wesley says, "John Whitelamb wants a gown much: I am not rich enough to buy him one at present. If you are willing, my twenty shillings (that were) should go towards that, I will add ten to them, and let it lie till I have tried my utmost with my friends to make up the price of a new one."

people were coming out, that Mr. Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, would preach in the church-yard at six o'clock. "Accordingly," says he, "at six I came, and found such a congregation as I believe Epworth never saw before. I stood near the east end of the church, upon my father's tomb-stone, and cried, 'The kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'"

Wesley has been accused harshly and hastily of want of feeling, because he preached upon his father's grave. But it was from feeling, as much as enthusiasm, that he acted, knowing that he should derive a deeper passion from the ground upon which he stood; like the Greek tragedian, who when he performed Electra, brought into the theatre the urn containing the ashes of his own child. Nor was there any danger that the act should be misconstrued by those who heard him: mad they might think him, but they knew his domestic character, and were assured that he had not stood with a holier or more reverential feeling beside that grave when his father's body was consigned to it, earth to earth. Seven successive evenings he preached upon that tomb-stone, and in no place did he ever preach with greater effect. "Lamentations," he says, "and great groanings were heard, God bowing their hearts so, and on every side, as, with one accord, they lifted up their voices and wept aloud; several dropt down as dead; and, among the rest, such a cry was heard of sinners groaning for the righteous-

ness of faith, as almost drowned my voice. But many of these soon lifted up their heads with joy, and broke out into thanksgiving, being assured they now had the desire of their soul, the forgiveness of their sins." Whitelamb was one of his auditors, and wrote to him afterwards in terms which, while they show a just sense of the rash doctrine that he preached, and the extravagance that he encouraged, show also the powerful ascendancy which Wesley had obtained over him by his talents and his virtues. "Dear brother," he says, "I saw you at Epworth on Tuesday evening. Fain would I have spoken to you, but that I am quite at a loss how to address or behave. Your way of thinking is so extraordinary, that your presence creates an awe, as if you were an inhabitant of another world. God grant you and your followers may always have entire liberty of conscience: will you not allow others the same? Indeed I cannot think as you do, any more than I can help honouring and loving you. Dear Sir, will you credit me? I retain the highest veneration and affection for you. The sight of you moves me strangely. I feel, in a higher degree, all that tenderness and yearning of bowels with which I am affected toward every branch of Mr. Wesley's family. I cannot refrain from tears when I reflect, this is the man who at Oxford was more than a father to me! this is he whom I have there heard expound or dispute publicly, or preach at St. Mary's with such applause! and, oh that I should ever add, whom I have lately heard preach at Epworth! Dear Sir,

is it in my power to serve or oblige you in any way? Glad I should be that you would make use of me. God open all our eyes, and lead us into truth whatever it be."

Wesley has said that Whitelamb did not at this time believe in Christianity, nor for many years afterwards. If it were so, the error was not improbably occasioned by a strong perception of the excesses into which the Methodists had been betrayed; just as monkery and the Romish fables produce irreligion in Catholic countries. But it is most likely a hasty, or a loose expression, for Whitelamb was a man of excellent character: no tendency to unbelief appears in such of his letters as have been published; and the contrary inference may be drawn from what he says to Charles: "I cannot but look upon your doctrines as of ill consequence; — consequence, I say; for, take them nakedly in themselves, and nothing seems more innocent; nay, good and holy. Suppose we grant that in you and the rest of the leaders, who are men of sense and discernment, what is called the seal and testimony of the Spirit is something real, yet I have great reason to think that, in the generality of your followers, it is merely the effect of a heated fancy." This is judicious language, and certainly betrays no mark of irreligion. He offered his pulpit to Wesley, and incurred much censure for so doing, from those who neither considered the relation in which he stood to him, nor did justice to his principles and feelings.

Some remarkable circumstances attended Wesley's preaching in these parts. Some of his opponents, in the excess of their zeal against enthusiasm, took up a whole waggon load of Methodists, and carried them before a justice. When they were asked what these persons had done, there was an awkward silence; at last, one of the accusers said, "Why, they pretended to be better than other people; and, besides, they prayed from morning till night." The magistrate asked if they had done nothing else. — "Yes, Sir," said an old man, "an't please your worship, they have convarted my wife. Till she went among them she had such a tongue! and now she is as quiet as a lamb!" — "Carry them back, carry them back," said the magistrate, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town." Among the hearers in the church-yard was a gentleman, remarkable for professing that he was of no religion: for more than thirty years he had not attended at public worship of any kind; and, perhaps, if Wesley had preached from the pulpit instead of the tomb-stone, he might not have been induced to gratify his curiosity by hearing him. But when the sermon was ended, Wesley perceived that it had reached him, and that he stood like a statue; so he asked him abruptly, "Sir, are you a sinner?" — "Sinner enough," was the reply, which was uttered in a deep and broken voice; and he continued staring upwards, till his wife and servants, who were all in tears, put him into his chaise and took him home. Ten years afterwards, Wesley says in his journal, "I called on the gentle-

man who told me he was 'sinner enough,' when I preached first at Epworth on my father's tomb, and was agreeably surprised to find him strong in faith, though exceeding weak in body. For some years, he told me, he had been rejoicing in God without either doubt or fear, and was now waiting for the welcome hour when he should depart and be with Christ."

There were indeed few places where his preaching was attended with greater or more permanent effect than at Epworth, upon this first visit. "Oh," he exclaims, "let none think his labour of love is lost, because the fruit does not immediately appear! Near forty years did my father labour here, but he saw little fruit of all his labour. I took some pains among this people too; and my strength also seemed spent in vain. But now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly, but the seed so long sown now sprung up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins." The intemperate and indecent conduct of the curate must undoubtedly have provoked a feeling in favour of Wesley; for this person, who was under the greatest obligations to the Wesley family, behaved toward him with the most offensive brutality. In a state of beastly intoxication himself, he set upon him with abuse and violence in the presence of a thousand people; and when some persons, who had come from the neighbouring towns to attend upon the new preacher, by his direction, waited upon Mr. Romley to inform him

that they meant to communicate on the following Sunday, he said to them in reply, "Tell Mr. Wesley I shall not give *him* the sacrament, for he is not *fit*." This insult called forth from Wesley a strong expression of feeling in his journal: "How wise a God," says he, "is our God! There could not have been so *fit* a place under Heaven where *This* should befal me: first, as my father's house, the place of my nativity, and the very place where, *according to the strictest sect of our religion*, I had so long *lived a Pharisee*. It was also *fit*, in the highest degree, that he who repelled me from that very table, where I had myself so often distributed the bread of life, should be one who owed his all in this world to the tender love which *my* father had shown to *his*, as well as personally to himself."

CHAPTER XIV.

OUTCRY AGAINST METHODISM. — VIOLENCE OF MOBS AND MISCONDUCT OF MAGISTRATES.

METHODISM had now assumed some form and consistence. Meeting-houses had been built, societies formed and disciplined, funds raised, rules enacted, lay-preachers admitted, and a regular system of itinerancy begun. Its furious symptoms had subsided, the affection had reached a calmer stage of its course, and there were no longer any of those outrageous exhibitions which excited scandal and compassion, as well as astonishment. But Wesley continued, with his constitutional fervour, to preach the doctrines of instantaneous regeneration, assurance, and sinless perfection. These doctrines gave just offence, and became still more offensive when they were promulgated by unlettered men, with all the vehemence and self-sufficiency of fancied inspiration. Wesley himself added to the offence by the loftiness of his pretensions. In the preface to his third journal he says, "It is not the work of man which hath lately appeared; all who calmly observe it must say, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' The manner wherein God hath wrought is as strange as the work itself. These extraordinary circumstances seem to have been designed by God for the farther

manifestation of his work, to cause his power to be known, and to awaken the attention of a drowsy world." He related cures wrought by his faith and his prayers, which he considered, and represented as positively miraculous. By thinking strongly on a text of Scripture which promised that these signs should follow those that believe, and by calling on Christ to increase his faith and confirm the word of his grace, he shook off instantaneously, he says, a fever which had hung upon him for some days, and was in a moment freed from all pain, and restored to his former strength. He visited a believer at night who was not expected to live till the morning: the man was speechless and senseless, and his pulse gone. "A few of us," says Wesley, "immediately joined in prayers. I relate the naked fact. Before we had done, his senses and his speech returned. Now, he that will account for this by natural causes has my free leave. But I choose to say, this is the power of God." So, too, when his own teeth ached, he prayed, and the pain left him. And this faith was so strong, that it sufficed sometimes to cure not only himself but his horse also. "My horse," he says, "was so exceedingly lame, that I was afraid I must have lain by. We could not discern what it was that was amiss, and yet he could scarce set his foot to the ground. By riding thus seven miles I was thoroughly tired, and my head ached more than it had done for some months. What I here aver is the naked fact: let every man account for it as he sees good. I then thought, 'Cannot God heal

either man or beast, by any means, or without any? Immediately my weariness and headache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant. Nor did he halt any more either that day or the next. A very odd accident this also."

Even those persons who might have judged favourably of Wesley's intentions, could not but consider representations like these as discreditable to his judgement. But those who were less charitable impeached his veracity, and loudly accused him of hypocrisy and imposture. The strangest suspicions and calumnies were circulated; and men will believe any calumnies, however preposterously absurd, against those of whom they are disposed to think ill. He had hanged himself, and been cut down just in time; — he had been fined for selling gin; — he was not the real John Wesley, for every body knew that Mr. Wesley was dead. Some said he was a Quaker, others an Anabaptist: a more sapient censor pronounced him a Presbyterian-Papist. It was commonly reported that he was a Papist, if not a Jesuit; that he kept Popish priests in his house; — nay, it was beyond dispute that he received large remittances from Spain, in order to make a party among the poor, and when the Spaniards landed, he was to join them with 20,000 men. Sometimes it was reported that he was in prison upon a charge of high treason; and there were people who confidently affirmed that they had seen him with the Pretender in France. Reports to this effect were so prevalent, that when, in the beginning of the year 1744, a proclamation

was issued requiring all Papists to leave London, he thought it prudent to remain a week there, that he might cut off all occasion of reproach; and this did not prevent the Surry magistrates from summoning him, and making him take the oath of allegiance, and sign the declaration against Popery. Wesley was indifferent to all other accusations, but the charge of disaffection, in such times, might have drawn on serious inconveniences; and he drew up a loyal address to the King, in the name of "The Societies in derision called Methodists." They thought it incumbent upon them to offer this address, the paper said, if they must stand as a distinct body from their brethren; but they protested that they were a part, however mean, of the Protestant Church established in these kingdoms; and that it was their principle to revere the higher powers as of God, and to be subject for conscience sake. The address, however, was not presented, probably because of an objection which Charles started, of its seeming to allow that they were a body distinct from the National Church, whereas they were only a sound part of that Church. Charles himself was more seriously incommoded by the imputation of disloyalty than his brother. When he was itinerating in Yorkshire, an accusation was laid against him of having spoken treasonable words, and witnesses were summoned before the magistrates at Wakefield to depose against him. Fortunately for him, he learnt this in time to present himself, and confront the witnesses. He had prayed that the Lord would call home his banished ones; and this the accusers construed, in good faith,

to mean the Pretender. The words would have had that meaning from the mouth of a Jacobite. But Charles Wesley, with perfect sincerity, disclaimed any such intention. "I had no thoughts," he said, "of praying for the Pretender, but for those who confess themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth, — who seek a country, knowing this it not their home. You, Sir," he added, addressing himself to a clergyman upon the bench; "you, Sir, know, that the Scriptures speak of us as captive exiles, who are absent from the Lord while present in the body. We are not at home till we are in Heaven." The magistrates were men of sense: they perceived that he explained himself clearly — that his declarations were frank and unequivocal, and they declared themselves perfectly satisfied.

Yet these aspersions tended to aggravate the increasing obloquy under which the Wesleys and their followers were now labouring. "Every Sunday," says Charles, "damnation is denounced against all who hear us, for we are Papists, Jesuits, seducers, and bringers-in of the Pretender. The clergy murmur aloud at the number of communicants, and threaten to repel them." He was himself repelled at Bristol, with circumstances of indecent violence. "Wives and children," he says, "are beaten and turned out of doors, and the persecutors are the complainers: it is always the lamb that troubles the water!" A maid-servant was turned away by her master, "because," he said, "he would have none in his house who had

received the Holy Ghost!" She had been thrown into the convulsions of Methodism, and continued in them fourteen hours. This happened at Bath, where, as Charles expresses himself, "Satan took it ill to be attacked in his head quarters." John had a curious interview there with Beau Nash, for it was in his reign. While he was preaching, this remarkable personage entered the room, came close to the preacher, and demanded of him by what authority he was acting. Wesley made answer, "By that of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the present Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.'"—Nash then affirmed that he was acting contrary to the laws: "Besides," said he, "your preaching frightens people out of their wits."—"Sir," replied Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?"—"No," said the Master of the Ceremonies.—"How then can you judge of what you never heard?"—Nash made answer, "By common report."—"Sir," said Wesley, "is not your name Nash? I dare not judge of you by common report: I think it not enough to judge by." However accurate common report might have been, and however rightly Nash might have judged of the extravagance of Methodism, he was delivering opinions in the wrong place; and when he desired to know what the people came there for, one of the congregation cried out, "Let an old woman answer him:—you, Mr. Nash, take care of your body, we take care of our souls, and for the food of our souls we come here." He found himself a

very different person in the meeting-house from what he was in the pump-room or the assembly, and thought it best to withdraw.

But Wesley had soon to encounter more dangerous opposition. Bristol was the first place where he received any serious disturbance from the rabble. After several nights of prelusive uproar, the mob assembled in great strength. "Not only the courts and the alleys," he says, "but all the street upwards and downwards, was filled with people, shouting, cursing and swearing, and ready to swallow the ground with fierceness and rage. They set the orders of the magistrates at nought, and grossly abused the chief constable, till a party of peace officers arrived and took the ringleaders into custody. When they were brought up before the mayor, Mr. Combe, they began to excuse themselves, by reviling Wesley; but the mayor properly cut them short by saying, "What Mr. Wesley is is nothing to you. I will keep the peace. I will have no rioting in this city." And such was the effect of this timely and determined interposition of the civil power, that the Methodists were never again disturbed by the rabble at Bristol. In London also the same ready protection was afforded. The chairman of the Middlesex justices, hearing of the disposition which the mob had shown, called upon Mr. Wesley, and telling him that such things were not to be suffered, added, "Sir, I and the other Middlesex magistrates have orders from above to do you justice whenever you apply to us." This assistance he applied for when the mob stoned

him and his followers in the streets, and attempted to unroof the Foundry. At Chelsea they threw wildfire and crackers into the room where he was preaching. At Long-Lane they broke in the roof with large stones, so that the people within were in danger of their lives. Wesley addressed the rabble without effect; he then sent out three or four steady and resolute men to seize one of the ringleaders: they brought him into the house, cursing and blaspheming, dispatched him under a good escort to the nearest justice, and bound him over to the next sessions at Guildford. A remarkable circumstance occurred during this scene. One of the stoutest champions of the rioters was struck with sudden contrition, and came into the room with a woman who had been as ferocious as himself—both to fall upon their knees, and acknowledge the mercy of God.

These disturbances were soon suppressed in the metropolis and its vicinity, where the magistrates knew their duty, and were ready to perform it; but in some parts of the country, the very persons whose office it was to preserve the peace, instigated their neighbours and dependants to break it. Wesley had preached at Wednesbury, in Staffordshire, both in the town-hall, and in the open air, without molestation. The colliers in the neighbourhood had listened to him peaceably; and between three and four hundred persons formed themselves into a society as Methodists. Mr. Egginton, the minister of that town, was at first well pleased with this; but offence was given him by some great indis-

cretion, and from that time he began to oppose the Methodists by the most outrageous means. Some of the neighbouring magistrates were ignorant enough of their duty, both as magistrates and as men, to assist him in stirring up the rabble, and to refuse to act in behalf of the Methodists, when their persons and property were attacked. Mobs were collected by the sound of horn, windows were demolished, houses broken open, goods destroyed or stolen, men, women, and children beaten, pelted, and dragged in the kennels, and even pregnant women outraged to the imminent danger of their lives, and the disgrace of humanity. The mob said they would make a law, and that all the Methodists should set their hands to it; and they nearly murdered those who would not sign a paper of recantation. When they had had the law in their own hands for four or five months, (such in those days was the state of the police!) Wesley came to Birmingham on his way to Newcastle; and hearing of the state of things at Wednesbury, went there, like a man whose maxim it was always to look danger in the face. He preached in mid-day, and in the middle of the town, to a large assembly of people, without the slightest molestation either going or coming, or while he was on the ground. But in the evening the mob beset the house in which he was lodged: they were in great strength, and their cry was, "Bring out the minister! we *will* have the minister!" Wesley, who never, on any occasion, lost his calmness or his self-possession, desired one of his friends to take the captain of

the mob by the hand, and lead him into the house. The fellow was either soothed or awed by Wesley's appearance and serenity. He was desired to bring in one or two of the most angry of his companions: they were appeased in the same manner, and made way for the man whom, five minutes before, they would fain have pulled to pieces, that he might go out to the people. Wesley then called for a chair, got upon it, and demanded of the multitude what they wanted with him? Some of them made answer, they wanted him to go with them to the justice. He replied, with all his heart; and added a few sentences, which had such an effect, that a cry arose, "The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defence." But when he asked whether they should go to the justice immediately; or in the morning, (for it was in the month of October, and evening was closing in,) most of them cried, "To-night, to-night!" Accordingly they set out for the nearest magistrate's, Mr. Lane, of Bentley-Hall. His house was about two miles distant: night came on before they had walked half the way: it began to rain heavily: the greater part of the senseless multitude dispersed, but two or three hundred still kept together; and as they approached the house, some of them ran forward to tell Mr. Lane they had brought Mr. Wesley before his worship. "What have I to do with Mr. Wesley?" was the reply: "go and carry him back again." By this time the main body came up, and knocked at the door. They were told that Mr. Lane was not to be spoken with; but

the son of that gentleman came out, and enquired what was the matter. "Why, a'nt please you," said the spokesman, "they sing psalms all day; nay and make folks rise at five in the morning. And what would your worship advise us to do?" "To go home," said Mr. Lane, "and be quiet."

Upon this they were at a stand, till some one advised that they should go to Justice Persehouse, at Walsal. To Walsal, therefore, they went: it was about seven when they arrived, and the magistrate sent out word that he was in bed, and could not be spoken with. Here they were at a stand again: at last they thought the wisest thing they could do would be make the best of their way home; and about fifty undertook to escort Mr. Wesley; not as their prisoner, but for the purpose of protecting him, so much had he won upon them by his commanding and yet conciliating manner. But the cry had arisen in Walsal that Wesley was there, and a fresh fierce rabble rushed out in pursuit of their victim. They presently came up with him. His escort stood manfully in his defence; and a woman, who was one of their leaders, knocked down three or four Walsal men, before she was knocked down herself, and very nearly murdered. His friends were presently overpowered, and he was left in the hands of a rabble too much infuriated to hear him speak. "Indeed," he says, "it was in vain to attempt it, for the noise on every side was like the roaring of the sea." The entrance to the town was down a steep hill, and the path was slippery, because of the rain. Some of the ruffians endea-

voured to throw him down, and, if they had accomplished their purpose, it was not likely that he would ever have risen again: but he kept his feet. Part of his clothes was torn off; blows were aimed at him with a bludgeon, which, had they taken effect, would have fractured his skull; and one cowardly villain gave him a blow on the mouth which made the blood gush out. With such outrages they dragged him into the town. Seeing the door of a large house open, he attempted to go in, but was caught by the hair, and pulled back into the middle of the crowd. They hauled him toward the end of the main street, and there he made toward a shop-door, which was half open, and would have gone in, but the shopkeeper would not let him, saying, that, if he did, they would pull the house down to the ground. He made a stand, however, at the door, and asked if they would hear him speak? Many cried out, "No, no! knock his brains out! down with him! kill him at once!" A more atrocious exclamation was uttered by one or two wretches. "I almost tremble," says Wesley, "to relate it! — 'Crucify the dog! crucify him!'" Others insisted that he should be heard. Even in mobs that opinion will prevail which has the show of justice on its side, if it be supported boldly. He obtained a hearing, and began by asking, "What evil have I done? which of you all have I wronged in word or deed?" His powerful and persuasive voice, his ready utterance, and his perfect self-command, stood him on this perilous emergency in good stead. A cry was raised,

"Bring him away! bring him away!" When it ceased, he then broke out into prayer; and the very man who had just before headed the rabble, turned and said, "Sir, I will spend my life for you! follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head!" This man had been a prize-fighter at a bear garden; his declaration, therefore, carried authority with it; and when one man declares himself on the right side, others will second him who might have wanted courage to take the lead. A feeling in Wesley's favour was now manifested, and the shopkeeper, who happened to be the mayor of the town, ventured to cry out, "For shame! for shame! let him go;" having, perhaps, some sense of humanity, and of shame for his own conduct. The man who took his part conducted him through the mob, and brought him, about ten o'clock, back to Wednesbury in safety, with no other injury than some slight bruises. The populace seemed to have spent their fury in this explosion; and when, on the following morning, he rode through the town on his departure, some kindness was expressed by all whom he met. A few days afterwards, the very magistrates who had refused to see him when he was in the hands of the rabble, issued a curious warrant, commanding diligent search to be made after certain "disorderly persons, styling themselves Methodist preachers, who were going about raising routs and riots, to the great damage of His Majesty's liege people, and against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King."

It was only at Wednesbury that advantage was taken of the popular cry against the Methodists to break open their doors and plunder their houses; but greater personal barbarities were exercised in other places. Some of the preachers received serious injury; others were held under water till they were nearly dead; and of the women who attended them, some were so treated by the cowardly and brutal populace, that they never thoroughly recovered. In some places they daubed the preacher all over with paint. In others* they pelted the people in the meetings with egg-shells, which they had filled with blood and stopt with pitch. The progress of methodism was rather furthered than impeded by this kind of persecution, for it rendered the Methodists objects of curiosity and compassion; and in every instance the preachers displayed that fearlessness which enthusiasm† inspires, and which, when the madness of the moment was over, made even their enemies respect them.

* The most harmless mode of annoyance was practised at Bedford. The meeting-room was over a place where pigs were kept. An alderman of the town was one of the society; and his dutiful nephew took care that the pigs should always be fed during the time of preaching, that the alderman might have the full enjoyment of their music as well as their odour. Wesley says, in one of his Journals, "the stench from the swine under the room was scarce supportable. Was ever a preaching place over a hog-stye before! Surely they love the gospel who come to hear it in such a place."

† When John Leach was pelted near Rochdale in those riotous days, and saw his brother wounded in the forehead by a stone, he was mad enough to tell the rabble that not one of them could hit him, if he were to stand preaching there till midnight. Just then the mob began to quarrel among themselves, and therefore left off pelting. But the anecdote has been related by his brethren for his praise!

These things were sufficiently disgraceful to the nation; but the conduct of many of the provincial magistrates was far more so, for they suffered themselves to be so far influenced by passion and popular feeling, as to commit acts of abominable oppression under the colour of law. The vicar of Birstal, which was John Nelson's home and head-quarters, thought it justifiable to rid the parish by any means of a man who preached with more zeal and more effect than himself; and he readily consented to a proposal from the alehouse-keepers that John should be pressed for a soldier; for, as fast as he made converts, they lost customers. He was pressed accordingly, and taken before the commissioners at Halifax, where the vicar was one of the bench, and though persons enough attended to speak to his character, the commissioners said they had heard enough of him from the minister of his parish, and could hear nothing more. "So, gentlemen," said John, "I see there is neither law nor justice for a man that is called a Methodist:" and addressing the vicar by his name, he said, "What do you know of me that is evil? Whom have I defrauded? or where have I contracted a debt that I cannot pay?" — "You have no visible way of getting your living," was the reply. He answered, "I am as able to get my living with my hands as any man of my trade in England is, and you know it." But all remonstrances were in vain, he was marched off to Bradford, and there, by order of the commissioners, put in the dungeon: the filth and blood from the shambles ran into the

place, and the only accommodation afforded him there was some stinking straw, for there was not even a stone to sit on.

John Nelson had as high a spirit and as brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with; and he was encouraged by the good offices of many zealous friends, and the sympathy of some to whom he was a stranger. A soldier had offered to be surety for him, and an inhabitant of Bradford, though an enemy to the Methodists, had, from mere feelings of humanity, offered to give security for him if he might be allowed to lie in a bed. His friends brought him candles, and meat and water, which they put through a hole in the door, and they sang hymns till a late hour in the night, they without and he within. A poor fellow was with him in this miserable place, who might have been starved if Nelson's friends had not brought food for him also. When they lay down upon their straw, this man asked him, "Pray, sir, are all these your kinsfolk, that they love you so well? I think they are the most loving people that ever I saw in my life." At four in the morning his wife came and spake to him through the hole in the door; and John, who was now well read in his Bible, said that Jeremiah's lot was fallen upon him. The wife had profited well by her husband's lessons. Instead of bewailing for him and for herself, (though she was to be left with two children, and big with another,) she said to him, "Fear not; the cause is God's for which you are here, and he will plead it himself: therefore be not concerned about me and the

children; for he that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us. He will give you strength for your day; and after we have suffered a while, he will perfect that which is lacking in our souls, and then bring us where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest." Early in the morning he was marched, under a guard, to Leeds; the other pressed men were ordered to the alehouse, but he was sent to prison; and there he thought of the poor pilgrims who were arrested in their progress; for the people came in crowds, and looked at him through the iron grate. Some said it was a shame to send a man for a soldier for speaking the truth, when they who followed the Methodists, and till that time had been as wicked as any in the town, were become like new creatures, and never an ill word was heard from their lips. Others wished that all the Methodists were hanged out of the way. "They make people go mad," said they; "and we cannot get drunk or swear, but every fool must correct us, as if we were to be taught by them. And this is one of the worst of them." Here, however, he met with some kindness. The jailor admitted his friends to see him, and a bed was sent him by some compassionate person, when he must otherwise have slept upon stinking straw.

On the following day he was marched to York, and taken before some officers. Instead of remonstrating with them upon the illegal manner in which he had been seized, and claiming his discharge, he began to reprove them for swearing; and when they told him he was not to preach there, for he

was delivered to them as a soldier, and must not talk in that manner to his officers, he answered, that there was but one way to prevent him, which was by not swearing in his hearing. John Nelson's reputation was well known in York, and the popular prejudice against the Methodists was just at its height. "We were guarded through the city," he says, "but it was as if hell were moved from beneath to meet me at my coming. The streets and windows were filled with people, who shouted and huzzaed, as if I had been one that had laid waste the nation. But the Lord made my brow like brass, so that I could look on them as grasshoppers, and pass through the city as if there had been none in it but God and myself." Lots were cast for him at the guard-house; and when it was thus determined which captain should have him, he was offered money, which he refused to take, and for this they bade the sergeant hand-cuff him, and send him to prison. The hand-cuffs were not put on: but he was kept three days in prison, where he preached to the poor reprobates among whom he was thrown, and, wretches as they were, ignorant of all that was good, and abandoned to all that was evil, the intrepidity of the man who reproved them for their blasphemies, and the sound reason which appeared amidst all the enthusiasm of his discourse, was not without effect. Strangers brought him food; his wife also followed him here, and encouraged him to go on and suffer every thing bravely for conscience sake. On the third day a court-martial was held, and he was guarded to it

by a file of musqueteers, with their bayonets fixed. When the court asked, "What is this man's crime?" the answer was, "This is the Methodist preacher, and he refuses to take money:" upon which they turned to him, and said, "Sir, you need not find fault with us, for we must obey our orders, which are to make you act as a soldier: you are delivered to us; and if you have not justice done you, we cannot help it." John Nelson plainly told them he would not fight, because it was against his way of thinking: and when he again refused the money, which by their bidding was offered him, they told him, that, if he ran away, he would be just as liable to suffer as if he had taken it. He replied, "If I cannot be discharged lawfully, I shall not run away. If I do, punish me as you please." He was then sent to his quarters, where his arms and accoutrements were brought him and put on. "Why do you gird me," said he, "with these warlike habiliments? I am a man averse to war, and shall not fight, but under the Prince of Peace, the Captain of my salvation: the weapons he gives me are not carnal, like these." He must bear those, they told him, till he could get his discharge. To this he made answer, that he would bear them then as a cross, and use them as far as he could without defiling his conscience, which he would not do for any man on earth.

There was a spirit in all this which, when it had ceased to excite ridicule from his comrades, obtained respect. He had as good opportunities of exhorting and preaching as he could desire: he

distributed also the little books which Wesley had printed to explain and vindicate the tenets of the Methodists, and was as actively employed in the cause to which he had devoted himself, as if he had been his own master. At last the ensign of his company sent for him, and accosting him with an execration, swore he would have no preaching nor praying in the regiment. "Then," said John, "Sir, you ought to have no swearing or cursing neither; for surely I have as much right to pray and preach, as you have to curse and swear." Upon this the brutal ensign swore he should be damnably flogged for what he had done. "Let God look to that," was the resolute man's answer. "The cause is His. But if you do not leave off your cursing and swearing, it will be worse with you than with me." The ensign then bade the corporal put that fellow into prison directly; and when the corporal said he must not carry a man to prison unless he gave in his crime with him, he told him it was for disobeying orders. To prison, therefore, Nelson was taken, to his heart's content; and, after eight-and-forty hours' confinement, was brought before the major, who asked him what he had been put in confinement for. "For warning people to flee from the wrath to come," he replied; "and if that be a crime, I shall commit it again, unless you cut my tongue out; for it is better to die than to disobey God." The major told him, if that was all, it was no crime: when he had done his duty, he might preach as much as he liked, but he must make no mobs. And then wishing that all men

were like him, he dismissed him to his quarters. But Nelson was not yet out of the power of the ensign. One Sunday, when they were at Darlington, hoping to find an occasion for making him feel it, he asked him why he had not been at church. Nelson replied, "I was, Sir, and if you had been there, you might have seen me; for I never miss going when I have an opportunity." He then asked him if he had preached since they came there: and being told that he had not publicly, wished, with an oath, that he would, that he might punish him severely. John Nelson did not forbear from telling him, that if he did not repent and leave off his habit of swearing, he would suffer a worse punishment than it was in his power to inflict; and it was not without a great effort of self-restraint, that he subdued his resentment at the insults which this petty tyrant poured upon him, and the threats which he uttered. "It caused a sore temptation to arise in me," he says, "to think that an ignorant wicked man should thus torment me, — and I able to tie his head and heels together! I found an old man's bone in me; but the Lord lifted up a standard, when anger was coming on like a flood; else I should have wrung his neck to the ground, and set my foot upon him." The Wesleys, however, meantime, were exerting their influence to obtain his discharge, and succeeded by means of the Countess of Huntingdon. His companion, Thomas Beard, who had been pressed for the same reason, would probably have been discharged also, but the consequence

of his cruel and illegal impressment had cost him his life. He was seized with a fever, the effect of fatigue and agitation of mind: they let him blood, the arm festered, mortified, and was amputated; and he died soon after the operation!

Resort was had to the same abominable measure for putting a stop to Methodism in various other places. A society had been formed at St. Ives, in Cornwall, by Charles Wesley. There was, however, a strong spirit of opposition in that country; and when news arrived that Admiral Matthews had beaten the Spaniards, the mob pulled down the preaching-house for joy. "Such," says Wesley, "is the Cornish method of thanksgiving!—I suppose if Admiral Lestock had fought too, they would have knocked all the Methodists on the head!" The vulgar supposed them to be disaffected persons, ready to join the Pretender as soon as he should land; and men in a higher rank of life, and of more attainments, thought them "a parcel of crazy-headed fellows," and were so offended and disgusted with their extravagances, as not only to overlook the good which they really wrought among those who were not reclaimable by any other means, but to connive at, and even encourage any excesses which the brutal multitude might choose to commit against them. As the most expeditious mode of proceeding, pressing was resorted to; and some of the magistrates issued warrants for apprehending several of these obnoxious people, as being "able-bodied men, who had no lawful calling or sufficient maintenance;"—a pretext ab-

solutely groundless. Maxfield was seized by virtue of such a warrant, and offered to the captain of a king's ship then in Mount's Bay; but the officer refused to receive him, saying, "I have no authority to take such men as these, unless you would have me give him so much a-week to preach and pray to my people." He was then thrown into prison at Penzance; and when the mayor inclined to release him, Dr. Borlase, who, though a man of character and letters, was not ashamed to take an active part in proceedings like these, read the articles of war, and delivered him over as a soldier. A few days afterwards Mr. Ustick, a Cornish gentleman, came up to Wesley himself, as he was preaching in the open air, and said, "Sir, I have warrant from Dr. Borlase, and you must go with me." It had been supposed that this was striking at the root; and that if John Wesley himself were laid hold of, Cornwall would be rid of his followers. But, however plausible this may have seemed when the resolution was formed, Mr. Ustick found himself considerably embarrassed when he had taken into his custody one who, instead of being a wild hare-brained fanatic, had all the manner and appearance of a respectable clergyman, and was perfectly courteous and self-possessed. He was more desirous now of getting well out of the business than he had been of engaging in it; and this he did with great civility, asking him if he was willing to go with him to the Doctor. Wesley said, immediately, if he pleased. Mr. Ustick replied, "Sir, I must wait upon you to your

inn, and in the morning, if you will be so good as to go with me, I will show you the way." They rode there accordingly in the morning: — the Doctor was not at home, and Mr. Ustick, saying that he had executed his commission, took his leave, and left Wesley at liberty.

That same evening, as Wesley was preaching at Gwenap, two gentlemen rode fiercely among the people, and cried out, "Seize him! seize him for His Majesty's service!" Finding that the order was not obeyed, one of them alighted, caught him by the cassock, and said, "I take you to serve His Majesty." Taking him then by the arm, he walked away with him, and talked till he was out of breath of the wickedness of the fellows belonging to the society. Wesley at length took advantage of a break in his discourse to say, "Sir, be they what they will, I apprehend it will not justify you in seizing me in this manner, and violently carrying me away, as you said, to serve His Majesty." Rage by this time had spent itself, and was succeeded by an instant apprehension of the consequence which might result from acting illegally towards one who appeared likely to understand the laws, and able to avail himself of them. The colloquy ended in his escorting Mr. Wesley back to the place from whence he had taken him. The next day brought with it a more serious adventure. The house in which he was visiting an invalid lady at Falmouth, was beset by a mob, who roared out, "Bring out the *Canorum* — where is the *Canorum!*" a nickname which the

Cornish-men had given to the Methodists—it is not known wherefore. The crews of some privateers headed the rabble, and presently broke open the outer door, and filled the passage. By this time the persons of the house had all made their escape, except Wesley and a poor servant girl, who, for it was now too late to retire, would have had him conceal himself in the closet. He himself, from the imprecations of the rabble, thought his life in the most imminent danger, but any attempt at concealment would have made the case more desperate; and it was his maxim always to look a mob in the face. As soon, therefore, as the partition was broken down, he stepped forward into the midst of them:—"Here I am! which of you has any thing to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? or you? or you?" Thus he made his way bare-headed into the street, and continued speaking, till the captain swore that not a man should touch him: a clergyman and some of the better inhabitants came up and interfered, led him into a house, and sent him safely by water to Penryn.

Charles was in equal or greater danger at Devizes. The curate there took the lead against him, rung the bells backwards to call the rabble together; and two dissenters, of some consequence in the town, set them on, and encouraged them, supplying them with as much ale as they would drink, while they played an engine into the house, broke the windows, flooded the rooms, and spoiled the goods. The mayor's wife conveyed a message to

Charles, beseeching that he would disguise himself in women's clothes, and try to make his escape. Her son, a poor profligate, had been turned from the evil of his ways by the Methodists, just when he was about to run away and go to sea, and this had inclined her heart towards those from whom she had received so great a benefit. This, however, would have been too perilous an expedient. The only magistrate in the town refused to act when he was called upon: and the mob began to untile the house, that they might get in through the roof.

"I remembered the Roman senators," says Charles Wesley, "sitting in the Forum, when the Gauls broke in upon them, but thought there was a fitter posture for Christians, and told my companion they should take us on our knees." He had, however, resolute and active friends, one of whom succeeded, at last, in making a sort of treaty with a hostile constable; and the constable undertook to bring him safe out of town, if he would promise never to preach there again. Charles Wesley replied, "I shall promise no such thing: setting aside my office, I will not give up my birth-right, as an Englishman, of visiting what place I please in His Majesty's dominions." The point was compromised, by his declaring that it was not his present intention; and he and his companion were escorted out of Devizes by one of the rioters, the whole multitude pursuing them with shouts and execrations.

Field preaching, indeed, was at this time a service of great danger; and Wesley dwelt upon this

with great force, in one of his Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion. "Who is there among you, brethren," he says, "that is willing (examine your own hearts) even to save souls from death at this price? Would not you let a thousand souls perish, rather than you would be the instrument of rescuing them thus? I do not speak now with regard to conscience, but to the inconveniences that must accompany it. Can you sustain them if you would? Can you bear the summer sun to beat upon your naked head? Can you suffer the wintry rain or wind from whatever quarter it blows? Are you able to stand in the open air, without any covering or defence, when God casteth abroad his snow like wool, or scattereth his hoar frost like ashes? And yet these are some of the smallest inconveniences which accompany field-preaching. For, beyond all these, are the contradiction of sinners, the scoffs both of the great vulgar and the small; contempt and reproach of every kind — often more than verbal affronts — stupid, brutal violence, sometimes to the hazard of health, or limbs, or life. Brethren, do you envy us this honour? What, I pray you, would buy you to be a field-preacher? Or what, think you, could induce any man of common sense to continue therein one year, unless he had a full conviction in himself, that it was the will of God concerning him? Upon this conviction it is (were we to submit to these things on any other motive whatever, it would furnish you with a better proof of our distraction than any that has yet been found) that we now do

for the good of souls what you cannot, will not, dare not do. And we desire not that you should: but this one thing we may reasonably desire of you —do not increase the difficulties, which are already so great, that, without the mighty power of God, we must sink under them. Do not assist in trampling down a little handful of men, who, for the present, stand in the gap between ten thousand poor wretches and destruction, till you find some others to take their places."

The wholesome prosecution of a few rioters, in different places, put an end to enormities which would never have been committed, if the local magistrates had attempted to prevent them. The offenders were not rigorously pursued; they generally submitted before the trial, and it sufficed to make them understand that the peace might not be broken with impunity. "Such a mercy is it," says Wesley, "to execute the penalty of the law on those who will not regard its precepts! So many inconveniences to the innocent does it prevent, and so much sin in the guilty."

CHAPTER XV.

SCENES OF ITINERANCY.

When Wesley began his course of itinerancy, there were no turnpikes* in England, and no stage-coach which went farther north than York. In many parts of the northern counties neither coach nor chaise had ever been seen. He travelled on horseback, always with one of his preachers in company; and, that no time might be lost, he generally read as he rode. Some of his journies were exceedingly dangerous, — through the fens of his native country, when the waters were out, and over the fells of Northumberland, when they were covered with snow. Speaking of one, the worst of such expeditions, which had lasted two days in tremendous weather, he says, "Many a

* Wesley probably paid more for turnpikes than any other man in England, for no other person travelled so much; and it rarely happened to him to go twice through the same gate in one day. Thus he felt the impost heavily, and, being a horseman, was not equally sensible of the benefit derived from it. This may account for his joining in what was at one time the popular cry. Writing, in 1770, he says, "I was agreeably surprised to find the whole road from Thirsk to Stokesley, which used to be extremely bad, better than most turnpikes. The gentlemen had exerted themselves, and raised money enough to mend it effectually. So they have done for several hundred miles in Scotland, and throughout all Connaught, in Ireland. And so undoubtedly they might do throughout all England, without saddling the poor people with the vile imposition of turnpikes for ever."

rough journey have I had before, but one like this I never had, between wind, and hail, and rain, and ice, and snow, and driving sleet, and piercing cold. But it is past. Those days will return no more, and are therefore as though they had never been.

> Pain, disappointment, sickness, strife,
> Whate'er molests or troubles life,
> However grievous in its stay,
> It shakes the tenement of clay, —
> When past, as nothing we esteem,
> And pain, like pleasure, is a dream."

For such exertions and bodily inconveniences he was overpaid by the stir which his presence every where excited, the power which he exercised, the effect which he produced, the delight with which he was received by his disciples, and, above all, by the approbation of his own heart, the certainty that he was employed in doing good to his fellow-creatures, and the full persuasion that the Spirit of God was with him in his work.

At the commencement of his errantry, he had sometimes to bear with an indifference and insensibility in his friends, which was more likely than any opposition to have abated his ardour. He and John Nelson rode from common to common, in Cornwall, preaching to a people who heard willingly, but seldom or never proffered them the slightest act of hospitality. Returning one day in autumn from one of these hungry excursions, Wesley stopt his horse at some brambles, to pick the fruit. "Brother Nelson," said he, "we ought

to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries, for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food.* Do the people think we can live by preaching?" They were detained some time at St. Ives†, because of the illness of one of their companions; and their lodging was little better than their fare. "All that time," says John, "Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor: he had my great-coat for his pillow, and I had Burkett's Notes on the New Testament for mine. After being here near three weeks, one morning, about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and finding me awake,

* Wesley has himself remarked the inhospitality of his Cornish disciples, upon an after-visit in 1748, but he has left a blank for the name of the place. "About four," he says, "I came to ———; examined the leaders of the classes for two hours: preached to the largest congregation I had seen in Cornwall: met the society, and earnestly charged them to *beware of covetousness*. All this time I was not asked to eat or drink. After the Society, some bread and cheese were set before me. I think, verily, ——— will not be ruined by entertaining me once a-year." A little society in Lincolnshire, at this time, were charitable even to an excess. "I have not seen such another in all England," says Wesley. "In the class paper, which gives an account of the contribution for the poor, I observed one gave eight-pence, often ten-pence a week; another thirteen, fifteen, or eighteen-pence; another sometimes one, sometimes two shillings. I asked Micah Elmoor, the leader, (an Israelite, indeed, who now rests from his labour,) how is this? are you the richest society in England? He answered, 'I suppose not; but all of us, who are single persons, have agreed together to give both ourselves, and *all we have*, to God; and we do it gladly! whereby we are able, from time to time, to entertain all the strangers that come to Tetney, who often have no food to eat, nor any friend to give them a lodging.'"

† In his last Journal, Wesley notices the meeting-house of the Methodists at this place being "unlike any other in England, both as to its form and materials. It is exactly round, and composed wholly of brazen slags, which, I suppose, will last as long as the earth."

clapped me on the side, saying, 'Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, I have one whole side yet; for the skin is off but on one side.'"

It was also at the beginning of his career that he had to complain of inhospitality and indifference. As he became notorious to the world, and known among his own people, it was then considered a blessing and an honour to receive so distinguished a guest and so delightful a companion; a man who, in rank and acquirements, was superior to those by whom he was generally entertained; whose manners were almost irresistibly winning, and whose cheerfulness was like a perpetual sunshine. He had established for himself a dominion in the hearts of his followers, — in that sphere he moved as in a kingdom of his own; and, wherever he went, received the homage of gratitude, implicit confidence, and reverential affection. Few men have ever seen so many affecting instances of the immediate good whereof they were the instruments. A man nearly fourscore years of age, and notorious in his neighbourhood for cursing, swearing, and drunkenness, was one day among his chance hearers, and one of the company, perhaps with a feeling like that of the Pharisee in the parable, was offended at his presence. But, when Wesley had concluded his discourse, the old sinner came up to him, and catching him by the hands, said, "Whether thou art a good or a bad man I know not; but I know the words thou speakest are good! I never heard the like in all my life. Oh that God would set them

home upon my poor soul!" And then he burst into tears, so that he could speak no more. A Cornish man said to him, "Twelve years ago I was going over Gulvan Downs, and I saw many people together; and I asked what was the matter? They told me, a man going to preach. And I said, to be sure it is some 'mazed man! But when I saw you, I said, nay, this is no 'mazed man. And you preached on God's raising the dry bones; and from that time I could never rest till God was pleased to breathe on me, and raise my dead soul!" A woman, overwhelmed with affliction, went out one night with a determination of throwing herself into the New River. As she was passing the Foundery, she heard the people singing: she stopt, and went in; listened, learnt where to look for consolation and support, and was thereby preserved from suicide.

Wesley had been disappointed of a room at Grimsby, and when the appointed hour for preaching came, the rain prevented him from preaching at the Cross. In the perplexity which this occasioned, a convenient place was offered him by a woman, "which was a sinner." Of this, however, he was ignorant at the time, and the woman listened to him without any apparent emotion. But in the evening he preached eloquently, upon the sins and the faith of her who washed our Lord's feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head; and that discourse, by which the whole congregation were affected, touched her to the heart. She followed him to his lodging, crying

out, "O, Sir, what must I do to be saved?" Wesley, who now understood that she had forsaken her husband, and was living in adultery, replied, "Escape for your life! Return instantly to your husband!" She said she knew not how to go; she had just heard from him, and he was at Newcastle, above an hundred miles off. Wesley made answer, that he was going for Newcastle himself the next morning; she might go with him, and his companion should take her behind him. It was late in October: she performed the journey under this protection, and in a state of mind which beseemed her condition. "During our whole journey," he says, "I scarce observed her to smile; nor did she ever complain of any thing, or appear moved in the least with those trying circumstances which many times occurred in our way. A steady seriousness, or sadness rather, appeared in her whole behaviour and conversation, as became one that felt the burthen of sin, and was groaning after salvation." —"Glory be to the Friend of sinners!" he exclaims, when he relates the story. "He hath plucked one more brand out of the fire! Thou poor sinner, thou hast received a prophet in the name of a prophet, and thou art found of Him that sent him." The husband did not turn away the penitent; and her reformation appeared to be sincere and permanent.* After some time the husband left Newcastle, and wrote to her to follow him. "She set out," says Wesley, "in a ship bound for Hull. A storm met them by the way: the ship sprung a leak; but though it was near the

shore, on which many persons flocked together, yet the sea ran so exceedingly high, that it was impossible to make any help. Mrs. S. was seen standing on the deck, as the ship gradually sunk; and afterwards hanging by her hands on the ropes, till the masts likewise disappeared. Even then, for some moments, they could observe her floating upon the waves, till her clothes, which buoyed her up, being thoroughly wet, she sunk — I trust, into the ocean of God's mercy!"

Wesley once received an invitation from a clergyman in the country, whom he describes as a hoary, reverend, and religious man, whose very sight struck him with an awe. The old man said, that, about nine years ago, his only son had gone to hear Mr. Wesley preach, a youth in the flower of his age, and remarkable for piety, sense, and learning above his years. He came home, ill of the small-pox; but he praised God for the comfort which he derived from the preaching on that day, rejoiced in a full sense of his love, and triumphed in that assurance over sickness, and pain, and death. The old man added, that from that time he had loved Mr. Wesley, and greatly desired to see him; and he now blessed God that this desire had been fulfilled before he followed his dear son into eternity!

One day a post-chaise was sent to carry him from Alnwick to Warkworth, where he had been entreated to preach. "I found in it," says he, "one waiting for me, whom, in the bloom of youth, mere anguish of soul had brought to the

gates of death. She told me the troubles which held her in on every side, from which she saw no way to escape. I told her, 'The way lies straight before you: what you want is the love of God. I believe God will give it you shortly. Perhaps it is his good pleasure to make *you*, a poor bruised reed, the first witness here of that great salvation. Look for it *just as you are*, unfit, unworthy, unholy, — by simple faith, — every day, every hour.' She did feel the next day something she could not comprehend, and knew not what to call it. In one of the trials, which used to sink her to the earth, she was all calm, all peace and love; enjoying so deep a communication with God, as nothing external could interrupt. 'Ah, thou child of affliction, of sorrow and pain, hath Jesus found out thee also? And he is able to find and bring back thy husband — as far as he is wandered out of the way!'"

The profligates whom he reclaimed sometimes returned to their evil ways; and the innocent, in whom he had excited the fever of enthusiasm, were sometimes, when the pulse fell, left in a feebler state of faith than they were found; but it was with the afflicted in body or in mind that the good which he produced was deep and permanent. Of this he had repeated instances, but never a more memorable one than when he visited one of his female disciples, who was ill in bed, and after having buried seven of her family in six months, had just heard that the eighth, her husband, whom she dearly loved, had been cast away at sea. "I asked her," he says, "do you not fret at any of

these things?" She said, with a lovely smile, "Oh, no: how can I fret at any thing which is the will of God? Let Him take all beside, He has given me Himself. I love, I praise Him every moment!" — "Let any," says Wesley, "that doubts of *Christian perfection*, look on such a spectacle as this!" If it had not become a point of honour with him to vindicate how he could, and whenever he could, a doctrine which was as obnoxious as it is exceptionable and dangerous, he would not have spoken of Christian perfection here. He would have known that resignation, in severe sorrow, is an effort of nature as well as of religion, and therefore not to be estimated too highly as a proof of holiness. But of the healing effects of Christianity, the abiding cheerfulness, under unkindly circumstances, which it produces, the strength which it imparts in weakness, and the consolation and support in time of need, he had daily and abundant proofs.

It was said by an old preacher, that they who would go to Heaven must do four sorts of services; *hard* service, *costly* service, *derided* service, and *forlorn* service. Hard service Wesley performed all his life, with a willing heart; so willing a one, that no service could appear costly to him. He can hardly be said to have been tried with derision, because, before he became the subject of satire and contumely, he had attained a reputation and notoriety which enabled him to disregard them. These very attacks, indeed, proved only that he was a conspicuous mark, and stood upon high

ground. Neither was he ever called upon forlorn service: perhaps, if he had, his ardour might have failed him. Marks of impatience sometimes appear when he speaks of careless hearers. "I preached at Pocklington," he says, "with an eye to the death of that lovely woman Mrs. Cross. A gay young gentleman, with a young lady, stepped in, staid five minutes, and went out again, with as easy an unconcern as if they had been listening to a ballad singer. I mentioned to the congregation the deep folly and ignorance implied in such behaviour. These pretty fools never thought that, for this very opportunity, they are to give an account before men and angels." Upon another occasion, when the whole congregation had appeared insensible, he says of them, "they *hear*, but when will they *feel!* Oh, what can man do toward raising dead bodies or dead souls!"

But it was seldom that he preached to indifferent auditors, and still more seldom that any withdrew from him with marks of contempt. In general, he was heard with deep attention, for his believers listened with devout reverence; and they who were not persuaded listened, nevertheless, from curiosity, and behaved respectfully from the influence of example. "I wonder at those," says he, "who talk of the *indecency* of field-preaching. The highest *indecency* is in St. Paul's church, where a considerable part of the congregation are asleep, or talking, or looking about, not minding a word the preacher says. On the other hand, there is the highest *decency* in a church-yard or field, where the whole

congregation behave and look as if they saw the Judge of all, and heard Him speaking from Heaven." Sometimes when he had finished the discourse, and pronounced the blessing, not a person offered to move: — the charm was upon them still; and every man, woman, and child remained where they were, till he set the example of leaving the ground. One day many of his hearers were seated upon a long wall, built, as is common in the northern counties, of loose stones. In the middle of the sermon it fell with them. "I never saw, heard, nor read of such a thing before," he says. "The whole wall, and the persons sitting upon it, sunk down together, none of them screaming out, and very few altering their posture, and not one was hurt at all; but they appeared sitting at the bottom, just as they sate at the top. Nor was there any interruption either of my speaking or of the attention of the hearers."

The situations in which he preached sometimes contributed to the impression; and he himself perceived, that natural influences operated upon the multitude, like the pomp and circumstance of Romish worship. Sometimes, in a hot and cloudless summer day, he and his congregation were under cover of the sycamores, which afford so deep a shade to some of the old farm-houses in Westmoreland and Cumberland. In such a scene, near Brough, he observes, that a bird perched on one of the trees, and sung without intermission from the beginning of the service till the end. No instrumental concert would have accorded with the

place and feeling of the hour so well. Sometimes, when his discourse was not concluded till twilight, he saw that the calmness of the evening agreed with the seriousness of the people, and that "they seemed to drink in the word of God, as a thirsty land the refreshing showers." One of his preaching places in Cornwall was in what had once been the court-yard of a rich and honourable man. But he and all his family were in the dust, and his memory had almost perished. "At Gwenap, in the same county," he says, "I stood on the wall, in the calm still evening, with the setting sun behind me, and almost an innumerable multitude before, behind, and on either hand. Many likewise sate on the little hills, at some distance from the bulk of the congregation. But they could all hear distinctly while I read, '*The disciple is not above his Master*,' and the rest of those comfortable words which are day by day fulfilled in our ears." This amphitheatre was one of his favourite stations. He says of it in his old age, "I think this is one of the most magnificent spectacles which is to be seen on this side heaven. And no music is to be heard upon earth comparable to the sound of many thousand voices, when they are all harmoniously joined together, singing praises to God and the Lamb." At St. Ives, when a high wind prevented him standing where he had intended, he found a little inclosure near, one end of which was native rock, rising ten or twelve feet perpendicular, from which the ground fell with an easy descent. "A jetting out of the rock, about four feet from the ground,

gave me a very convenient pulpit. Here well nigh the whole town, high and low, rich and poor, assembled together. Nor was there a word to be heard, nor a smile seen, from one end of the congregation to the other. It was just the same the three following evenings. Indeed I was afraid, on Saturday, that the roaring of the sea, raised by the north wind, would have prevented their hearing. But God gave me so clear and strong a voice, that I believe scarce one word was lost." On the next day the storm had ceased, and the clear sky, the setting sun, and the smooth still ocean, all agreed with the state of the audience.

There is a beautiful garden at Exeter, under the ruins of the castle and of the old city wall, in what was formerly the moat: it was made under the direction of Jackson, the musician, a man of rare genius in his own art, and eminently gifted in many ways. Before the ground was thus happily appropriated, Wesley preached there to a large assembly, and felt the impressiveness of the situation. He says, "It was an awful sight! So vast a congregation in that solemn amphitheatre, and all silent and still, while I explained at large and enforced that glorious truth, 'Happy are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.'" In another place he says, "I rode to Blanchland, about twenty miles from Newcastle. The rough mountains round about were still white with snow. In the midst of them is a small winding valley, through which the Darwent runs. On the edge of this the little town stands, which is in-

deed little more than a heap of ruins. There seems to have been a large cathedral church, by the vast walls which still remain. I stood in the church-yard, under one side of the building, upon a large tomb-stone, round which, while I was at prayers, all the congregation kneeled down on the grass. They were gathered out of the lead-mines, from all parts; many from Allandale, six miles off. A row of children sat under the opposite wall, all quiet and still. The whole congregation drank in every word, with such earnestness in their looks, that I could not but hope that God will make this wilderness sing for joy." At Gawksham he preached "on the side of an enormous mountain. The congregation," he says, "stood and sate, row above row, in the sylvan theatre. I believe nothing in the postdiluvian earth can be more pleasant than the road from hence, between huge steep mountains, clothed with wood to the top, and watered at the bottom by a clear winding stream." Heptenstall Bank, to which he went from hence, was one of his favourite field stations. "The place in which I preached was an oval spot of ground, surrounded with spreading trees, scooped out, as it were, in the side of a hill, which rose round like a theatre." The congregation was as large as he could then collect at Leeds; but he says, "Such serious and earnest attention! I lifted up my hands, so that I preached as I scarce ever did in my life." Once he had the ground measured, and found that he was heard distinctly at a distance of seven-score yards. In the seventieth year of his

age, he preached at Gwenap, to the largest assembly that had ever collected to hear him: from the ground which they covered, he computed them to be not fewer than two-and-thirty thousand; and it was found, upon enquiry, that all could hear, even to the skirts of the congregation.

This course of life led him into a lower sphere of society than that wherein he would otherwise have moved; and he thought himself a gainer by the change. Writing to some Earl, who took a lively interest in the revival of religion which, through the impulse given, directly or indirectly, by Methodism, was taking place, he says, "To speak rough truth, I do not desire any intercourse with any persons of quality in England. I mean, for my own sake. They do me no good, and, I fear, I can do none to them." To another correspondent he says, "I have found some of the uneducated poor who have exquisite taste and sentiment; and many, very many of the rich, who have scarcely any at all."—"In most genteel religious people there is so strange a mixture, that I have seldom much confidence in them. But I love the poor; in many of them I find pure genuine grace, unmixed with paint, folly, and affectation." And again, "How unspeakable is the advantage in point of common sense, which middling people have over the rich! There is so much paint and affectation, so many unmeaning words and senseless customs among people of rank, as fully justify the remark made 1700 years ago, *Sensus communis in illâ fortunâ rarus.*"—"'Tis well," he says, "a few of the rich

and noble are called. Oh! that God would increase their number. But I should rejoice, were it the will of God, if it were done by the ministry of others. If I might choose, I should still, as I have done hitherto, *preach the gospel to the poor.*" Preaching in Monk-town church, (one of the three belonging to Pembroke,) a large old ruinous building, he says, "I suppose it has scarce had such a congregation in it during this century. Many of them were gay genteel people; so I spake on the first elements of the gospel: but I was still out of their depth. Oh, how hard it is to be *shallow* enough for a polite audience!" Yet Wesley's correspondence with the few persons over whom he obtained any influence in higher life, though written with honest and conscientious freedom, is altogether untainted with any of that alloy which too frequently appeared when he was addressing those of a lower rank. Those favourite topics are not brought forward, by which enthusiastic disciples were so easily heated and disordered; and there appears an evident feeling in the writer, that he is addressing himself to persons more judicious than his ordinary disciples.

But though Wesley preferred the middling and lower classes of society to the rich, the class which he liked least were the farmers. "In the little journies which I have lately taken," he says, "I have thought much of the huge encomiums which have been for many ages bestowed on a country life. How have all the learned world cried out,

> *O fortunati nimium, bona si sua norint,*
> *Agricolæ!*

But, after all, what a flat contradiction is this to universal experience! See the little house, under the wood, by the river side! There is *rural life* in perfection. How happy, then, is the farmer that lives there!—Let us take a detail of his happiness. He rises with, or before the sun, calls his servants, looks to his swine and cows, then to his stable and barns. He sees to the ploughing and sowing his gound in winter or in spring. In summer and autumn he hurries and sweats among his mowers and reapers. And where is his happiness in the mean time? Which of these employments do we envy? Or do we envy the delicate repast which succeeds, which the poet so languishes for?[1]

O quando faba, Pythagoræ cognata, simulque
Uncta satis pingui ponentur oluscula lardo!

Oh the happiness of eating *beans well greased with fat bacon*; nay, and *cabbage* too! Was Horace in his senses when he talked thus? or the servile herd of his imitators? Our eyes and ears may convince us there is not a less happy body of men in all England than the country farmers. In general their life is supremely dull; and it is usually unhappy too; for, of all people in the kingdom, they are the most discontented, seldom satisfied either with God or man."

Wesley was likely to judge thus unfavourably of the agricultural part of the people, because they were the least susceptible of Methodism. For Methodism could be kept alive only by associations and frequent meetings; and it is difficult, or im-

possible, to arrange these among a scattered population. Where converts were made, and the discipline could not be introduced among them, and the effect kept up by constant preaching and inspection, they soon fell off. "From the terrible instances I met with," says Wesley, "in all parts of England, I am more and more convinced that the Devil himself desires nothing more than this, that the people of any place should be half awakened, and then left to themselves to fall asleep again. Therefore I determine, by the grace of God, not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow." But this could only be done in populous places. Burnet has * observed, that more religious zeal is to be found in towns than in the country, and that that zeal is more likely to go astray. It is because men are powerfully acted upon by sympathy, whether for evil or for good; because opinions are as infectious as diseases, and both the one and the other find subjects enough to seize on in large cities, and those subjects in a

* "As for the men of trade and business, they are, generally speaking, the best body in the nation — generous, sober, and charitable: so that, while the people in the country are so immersed in their affairs that the sense of religion cannot reach them, there is a better spirit stirring in our cities; more knowledge, more zeal, and more charity, with a great deal more of devotion. There may be too much of vanity, with too pompous an exterior, mixed with these in the capital city; but, upon the whole, they are the best we have. Want of exercise is a great prejudice to their health, and a corrupter of their minds, by raising vapours and melancholy, that fills many with dark thoughts, rendering religion, which affords the truest joy, a burthen to them, and making them even a burthen to themselves. This furnishes prejudices against religion to those who are but too much disposed to seek for them."

Burnet's Conclusion to the History of his Own Times.

state which prepares them to receive the mental or bodily affection.

But even where Methodism was well established, and, on the whole, flourishing, there were great fluctuations, and Wesley soon found how little he could depend upon the perseverance of his converts. Early in his career he took the trouble of enquiring into the motives of seventy-six persons, who, in the course of three months, had withdrawn from one of his societies in the north.—The result was curious. Fourteen of them said they left it because otherwise their ministers would not give them the sacrament:—these, be it observed, were chiefly Dissenters. Nine, because their husbands or wives were not willing they should stay in it. Twelve, because their parents were not willing. Five, because their master and mistress would not let them come. Seven, because their acquaintance persuaded them to leave it. Five, because people said such bad things of the Society. Nine, because they would not be laughed at. Three, because they would not lose the poors' allowance. Three more, because they could not spare time to come. Two, because it was too far off. One, because she was afraid of falling into fits:—her reason might have taught Wesley a useful lesson. One, because people were so rude in the street. Two, because *Thomas Naisbit* was in the Society. One, because he would not turn his back on his baptism. One, because the Methodists were *mere* Church-of-England-men. And one, because it was time enough to serve God yet. The character of

the converts, and the wholesome discipline to which they were subject, is still farther exhibited, by an account of those who, in the same time, had been expelled from the same Society: — they were, two for cursing and swearing, two for habitual Sabbath-breaking, seventeen for drunkenness, two for retailing spirituous liquors, three for quarrelling and brawling, one for beating his wife, three for habitual wilful lying, four for railing and evil-speaking, one for idleness and laziness, and nine-and-twenty for lightness and carelessness. — It would be well for the community if some part of this discipline were in general use.

When Wesley became accustomed to such fluctuations, he perceived that they must be, and reasoned upon them sensibly. In noticing a considerable increase which had taken place in one of his societies in a short time, he says, "Which of these will hold fast their profession? The fowls of the air will devour some, the sun will scorch more, and others will be choked by the thorns springing up. I wonder we should ever expect that half of those who *hear the word with joy*, will bring forth *fruit unto perfection.*" — "How is it," he asks himself, "that almost in every place, even where there is no lasting fruit, there is so great an impression made at first upon a considerable number of people? The fact is this: every where the work of God rises higher and higher, till it comes to a point. Here it seems, for a short time, to be at a stay, and then it gradually sinks again. All this may easily be accounted for. At first curiosity brings

many hearers; at the same time God draws many, by his preventing grace, to hear his word, and comforts them in hearing: one then tells another; by this means, on the one hand, curiosity spreads and increases; and, on the other, the drawings of God's spirit touch more hearts, and many of them more powerfully than before. He now offers grace to all that hear, most of whom are in some measure affected, and more or less moved with approbation of what they hear — desire to please God, and good-will to his messenger. These principles, variously combined and increasing, raise the general work to its highest point. But it cannot stand here; for, in the nature of things, curiosity must soon decline. Again, the drawings of God are not followed, and thereby the spirit of God is grieved: the consequence is, He strives with this and this man no more, and so his drawings end. Thus both the natural and supernatural power declining, most of the hearers will be less and less affected. Add to this, that in the process of the work, *it must be, that offences will come.* Some of the hearers, if not preachers also, will act contrary to their profession. Either their follies or faults will be told from one to another, and lose nothing in the telling. Men, once curious to hear, will now draw back: men once drawn, having stifled their good desires, will disapprove what they approved before, and feel dislike, instead of good-will, to the preacher. Others, who were more or less convinced, will be afraid or ashamed to acknowledge that conviction; and all these will catch

at ill stories (true or false) in order to justify their change. When, by this means, all who do not savingly believe, have quenched the spirit of God, the little flock goes on from faith to faith; the rest sleep on, and take their rest. And thus the number of hearers in every place may be expected, first to increase, and then decrease."

CHAPTER XVI.

WESLEY'S LAY-COADJUTORS.

When Wesley had once admitted the assistance of lay-preachers, volunteers in abundance offered their zealous services. If he had been disposed to be nice in the selection, it was not in his power. He had called up a spirit which he could not lay, but he was still able to controul and direct it. Men were flattered by being admitted to preach with his sanction, and sent to itinerate where he was pleased to appoint, who, if he had not chosen to admit their co-operation, would not have been withheld from exercising the power which they felt in themselves, and indulging the strong desire, which they imputed to the impulse of the Spirit: but had they taken this course, it would have been destructive to the scheme which was now fairly developed before him.

Wesley had taken no step in his whole progress so reluctantly as this. The measure was forced upon him by circumstances. It had become inevitable, in the position wherein he had placed himself; still he was too judicious a man, too well acquainted with history and with human nature, not to feel a proper repugnance to the irregularity which he sanctioned, and to apprehend the *ill con-*

sequences which were likely to ensue. He says himself, that to touch this point was at one time to touch the apple of his eye: and in his writings he carefully stated, that the preachers were permitted by him, but not appointed. One of those clergymen, who would gladly, in their sphere, have co-operated with the Wesleys, had they not disliked the extravagancies of Methodism, and foreseen the schism to which it was leading, objected to this distinction. "I fear, Sir," said he, "that your saying you do not appoint, but only approve of the lay-preachers, from a persuasion of their call and fitness, savours of disingenuity. Where is the difference? Under whose sanction do they act? Would they generally think their call a sufficient warrant for commencing preachers, or be received in that capacity by your people, without your approbation, tacit or express? And what is their preaching upon this call, but a manifest breach upon the order of the Church, and an inlet to confusion, which, in all probability, will follow upon your death; and, if I mistake not, you are upon the point of knowing by your own experience."

But Wesley had so often been called upon to defend himself, that he perfectly understood the strength of his ground. Replying for his brother, and the few other clergymen who acted with him, as well as for himself, he made answer, "We have done nothing rashly, nothing without deep and long consideration, (hearing and weighing all objections,) and much prayer. Nor have we taken one deliberate step, of which we, as yet, see rea-

son to repent. It is true, in some things we vary from the rules of our Church; but no further than; we apprehend, is our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this that we preach abroad, use extemporary prayer, form those who appear to be awakened into societies, and permit laymen, whom we believe God has called, to preach. I say *permit*, because we ourselves have hitherto viewed it in no other light. This we are clearly satisfied that we *may* do; that we *may do more*, we are not satisfied. It is not clear to us that Presbyters, so circumstanced as we are, may *appoint*, or *ordain* others; but it is, that we may *direct*, as well as *suffer* them to do, what we conceive they are *moved to by the Holy Ghost*. It is true, that in *ordinary* cases, both an *inward* and an *outward* call are requisite; but we apprehend, there is something far from *ordinary* in the present case; and, upon the calmest view of things, we think that they who are only called of God, and not of man, have *more* right to preach than they who are only called of man and not of God. Now, that many of the clergy, though called of man, are not called of God to preach his gospel, is undeniable: first, because they themselves utterly disclaim, nay, and ridicule the inward call; secondly, because they do not know what the gospel is; of consequence they *do not*, and *cannot* preach it. Dear Sir, coolly and impartially consider this, and you will see on which side the difficulty lies. I do assure you, this at present is my chief embarrassment. That I have not gone too far yet, I

know; but whether I have gone far enough, I am extremely doubtful. I see those running whom God hath not sent; destroying their own souls, and those that hear them; perverting the right ways of the Lord, and blaspheming the truth as it is in Jesus. I see the blind leading the blind, and both falling into the ditch. Unless I warn, in all ways I can, these perishing souls of their danger, am I clear of the blood of these men? Soul-damning clergymen lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen!"

He justified the measure, by showing how it had arisen: a plain account of the whole proceeding was, he thought, the best defence of it. "And I am bold to affirm," says he, in one of his Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion, "that these unlettered men have help from God for that great work, the saving souls from death; seeing he hath enabled, and doth enable them still, to turn many to righteousness. Thus hath he 'destroyed the wisdom of the wise, and brought to nought the understanding of the prudent.' When they imagined they had effectually shut the door, and locked up every passage, whereby any help could come to two or three preachers, weak in body as well as soul, who they might reasonably believe would, humanly speaking, wear themselves out in a short time, — when they had gained their point, by securing (as they supposed) all the men of learning in the nation, *He that sitteth in heaven laughed them to scorn*, and came upon them by a way they thought not of. *Out of the stones he raised up*

those who should beget children to Abraham. We had no more foresight of this than you. Nay, we had the deepest prejudices against it, until we could not but own that God gave wisdom from above to these unlearned and ignorant men, so that the work of the Lord prospered in their hands, and sinners were daily converted to God."

Zeal was the only qualification which he required. If the aspirant possessed no other requisite for his work, and failed to produce an effect upon his hearers, his ardour was soon cooled, and he withdrew quietly from the field; but such cases were not very frequent. The gift of voluble utterance is the commonest of all gifts; and when the audience are in sympathy with the speaker, they are easily affected *: the understanding makes no demand, provided the passions find their food. But, on the other hand, when enthusiasm was united with strength of talents and of character, Wesley was a skilful preceptor, who knew how to discipline the untutored mind, and to imbue it thoroughly with his system. He strongly impressed upon his preachers the necessity of reading to improve themselves. In reproving and advising one who had neglected this necessary discipline, he points out to him the ill consequences of that

* Sewel relates, with all simplicity and sincerity, in his History of the Quakers, that his mother, a Dutch woman, preached in her native language to a congregation of English Friends, and that though they did not understand a single word, they were nevertheless edified by the discourse.—A man returned from attending one of Whitefield's sermons, and said it was good for him to be there: the place, indeed, was so crowded, that he had not been able to get near enough to hear *him*; "but then," he said, "I saw his blessed wig!"

neglect. "Hence," he says, "your talent in preaching does not increase: it is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep: there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this: you can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. Oh begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not: what is tedious at first, will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily. It is for your life! there is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul: give it time and means to grow: do not starve yourself any longer."

But when the disciple was of a thoughtful and enquiring mind, then Wesley's care was to direct his studies, well knowing how important it was that he should retain the whole and exclusive direction. Thus, in a letter to Mr. Benson, then one of the most hopeful, and since one of the most distinguished of his followers, he says, "When I recommend to any one a method or scheme of study, I do not barely consider this or that book separately, but in conjunction with the rest. And what I recommend, I *know;* I know both the style and sentiments of each author, and how he will confirm or illustrate what goes before, and prepare for what comes after. Therefore I must insist upon it, the interposing other books between these

is not good husbandry: it is not making your time and pains go as far as they might go. If you want more books, let *me* recommend more, who best understand my own scheme. And do not *ramble*, however learned the persons may be that advise you so to do."

To this disciple Wesley had occasion to say, "Beware you be not swallowed up in books! An ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge." This kind of caution was not often wanted. Nor, although many of his early preachers applied themselves diligently to the study of the languages, did he particularly encourage them in their desire of becoming learned men; for he perceived that, provided the preacher were thoroughly master of his system, and had the language of Scripture at command, the more, in other points of intellectual culture, he was upon a level with the persons among whom he was called to labour, the better would they comprehend him, and the more likely would he be to produce the desired effect. "Clearness," he says to one of his lay-assistants, "is necessary for you and me, because we are to instruct people of the lowest understanding; therefore we, above all, if we *think* with the wise, must yet speak with the vulgar. We should constantly use the most common, little, easy words (so they are pure and proper) which our language affords. When first I talked at Oxford to plain people in the castle or the town, I observed they gaped and stared. This quickly obliged me to alter my style and adopt the language of those I spoke to; and

yet there is a dignity in their simplicity, which is not disagreeable to those of the highest rank." Many of his ablest and most successful assistants perceived the good sense of this reasoning, and acted upon it. "I am but a brown-bread preacher," says Thomas Hanson, "that seek to help all I can to Heaven, in the best manner I can." Alexander Mather had received a good Scotch education in his boyhood, and was sometimes tempted to recover his lost Latin, and learn Greek and Hebrew also, when he observed the progress made by others who had not the same advantage to begin with. But this desire was set at rest, when he considered that these persons were not more instrumental than before, "either in awakening, converting, or building up souls," which he regarded as the "only business, and the peculiar glory of a Methodist preacher. In all these respects they had been useful," he said, "but not *more* useful than when they were without their learning;" and he doubted whether they had been so useful as they might have been, if they had employed the same time, the same diligence, and the same intenseness of thought in the several branches of that work for which they willingly gave up all."

But although Wesley was not desirous that his preachers should labour to obtain a reputation for learning, he repelled the charge of ignorance. "In the one thing," he says, "which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, ex-

perimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love,) are able to do. But oh! what manner of examination do most of those candidates go through? and what proof are the testimonials commonly brought (as solemn as the form is wherein they run) either of their piety or knowledge, to whom are entrusted those sheep which God hath purchased with his own blood?"

No founder of a monastic order ever more entirely possessed the respect, as well as the love and the admiration of his disciples; nor better understood their individual characters, and how to deal with each according to the measure of his capacity. Where strength of mind and steadiness were united with warmth of heart, he made the preacher his counsellor as well as his friend: when only simple zeal was to be found, he used it for his instrument as long as it lasted. An itinerant, who was troubled with doubts respecting his call, wrote to him in a fit of low spirits, requesting that he would send a preacher to supersede him in his circuit, because he believed he was out of his place. Wesley replied in one short sentence, "Dear brother, you are indeed *out of your place*; for you are *reasoning*, when you ought to be *praying*." And this was all. Thus tempering his authority, sometimes with playfulness, and always with kindness, he obtained from his early followers an unhesitating, a cheerful, and a devoted obedience. One of them, whom he had summoned from Bristol to meet him at Holyhead, and accom-

pany him to Ireland, set out on foot, with only three shillings in his pocket. It is a proof how confidently such a man might calculate upon the kindliness of human nature, that, during six nights out of seven, this innocent adventurer was hospitably entertained by utter strangers, and when he arrived he had one penny left. John Jane (such was his name) did not long survive this expedition; he brought on a fever by walking in exceeding hot weather; and Wesley, recording his death in his journal, concludes in this remarkable manner: — "All his clothes, linen and woollen, stockings, hat, and wig, are not thought sufficient to answer his funeral expences, which amount to 1l. 17s. 3d. All the money he had was 1s. 4d. — Enough for any unmarried preacher of the gospel to leave to his executors!" St. Francis himself might have been satisfied with such a disciple.

Men were not deterred from entering upon this course of life by a knowledge of the fatigue, the privations, and the poverty to which they devoted themselves; still less by the serious danger they incurred, before the people were made to understand that the Methodists were under the protection of the law. There is a stage of enthusiasm in which these things operate as incitements; but this effect ceases as the spirit sinks to its natural level. Many of the first preachers withdrew from the career when their ardour was abated; not because they were desirous of returning to the ways of the world, and emancipating themselves from the restraints of their new profession, but because

the labour was too great. Some received regular orders, and became useful ministers of the Establishment; others obtained congregations among the Dissenters; others resumed the trades which they had forsaken, and settling where the Methodists were numerous, officiated occasionally among them. The great extent of ground over which they were called to itinerate, while the number of preachers was comparatively small, occasioned them, if they were married men, or had any regard for their worldly welfare, thus to withdraw themselves; for the circuits were at that time so wide, that the itinerant could only command two or three days in as many months for enjoying the society of his family, and looking after his own concerns. Yet more persons than might have been expected persevered in their course, and generally had reason, even in a worldly point of view, to congratulate themselves upon the part which they had taken. From humble, or from low life, they were raised to a conspicuous station: they enjoyed respect and influence in their own sphere, which was the world to them; and, as moral and intellectual creatures, they may indeed be said to have been new-born, so great was the change which they had undergone.

Conversions have sometimes been produced by circumstances almost as dreadful as the miracle by which Saul the persecutor was smitten down. Such were the cases of S. Norbert, (omitting all wilder legends,) of S. Francisco de Borja, of the Abbe de

Rance, and, in our own days, of Vanderkemp. Sometimes the slightest causes have sufficed, and a chance-word has determined the future character of the hearer's life. The cases in Methodism have generally been of the latter kind. A preacher happened to say in a sermon, "there are two witnesses, dead and buried in the dust, who will rise up in judgement against you!" And holding up the Bible, he continued, "these are the two witnesses that have been dead and buried in the dust upon your shelf; the Old Testament and the New!" One man was present who felt what was said, as if his own guilt had been recorded against him, and was thus mysteriously revealed. "I felt," says he, "what was spoken. I remembered that my Bible was covered with dust, and that I had written my name with the point of my finger upon the binding. I thought I had signed my own damnation on the back of the witnesses." This brought on a fearful state of mind. He went home in great terror; and seeing a dead toad in his path, he wished, he says, that he had been a toad also, for then he should have had no soul to lose. In the middle of the night, while labouring under such feelings, he sat up in bed, and said, "Lord, how will it be with me in hell?" Just then a dog began to howl under his window, and reminded him of the weeping and gnashing of teeth. After a perilous struggle between Methodism and madness, the case came to a favourable termination, and John Furz spent the remainder of his days as a preacher.

A party of men were amusing themselves one day at an alehouse in Rotherham, by mimicking the Methodists. It was disputed who succeeded best, and this led to a wager. There were four performers, and the rest of the company was to decide, after a fair specimen from each. A Bible was produced, and three of the rivals, each in turn mounted the table, and held forth, in a style of irreverent buffoonery, wherein the Scriptures were not spared. John Thorp, who was the last exhibitor, got upon the table in high spirits, exclaiming, I shall beat you all! He opened the book for a text, and his eyes rested upon these words, "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!*" These words, at such a moment, and in such a place, struck him to the heart. He became serious, he preached in earnest, and he affirmed afterwards, that his own hair stood erect at the feelings which then came upon him, and the awful denunciations which he uttered. His companions heard him with the deepest silence. When he came down, not a word was said concerning the wager; he left the room immediately, without speaking to any one, went home in a state of great agitation, and resigned himself to the impulse which had thus strangely been produced. In consequence, he joined the Methodists, and became an itinerant preacher: but he would often say, when he related this story, that if ever he preached by the assistance of the Spirit of God, it was at that time.

Many of Wesley's early coadjutors have left memoirs of themselves, under the favourite title of

their "Experience." A few sketches from these authentic materials will illustrate the progress and nature of Methodism; and while they exhibit the eccentricities of the human mind, will lay open also some of its recesses.

CHAPTER XVII.

JOHN OLIVER. — JOHN PAWSON. — ALEXANDER MATHER. — THOMAS OLIVERS.

JOHN OLIVER, the son of a tradesman at Stockport, in Cheshire, received the rudiments of a liberal education at the grammar school in that town; but at the age of thirteen, in consequence of reduced circumstances, was taken into his father's shop. When he was about fifteen, the Methodists came to Stockport: he partook the general prejudice against them, and calling upon one with whom he chanced to be acquainted, took upon himself to convince him that he was of a bad religion, which was hostile to the church. The Methodist, in reply, easily convinced him that he had no religion at all. His pride was mortified at this defeat, and he went near his acquaintance no more; but the boy was touched at heart also: he left off his idle and criminal diversions, (of which cock-fighting was one,) read, prayed, fasted, regularly attended church, and repeated the prayers and collects every day. This continued some months, without any apparent evil; but having, at his father's instance, spent a Sabbath evening at an inn, with some young comrades from Manchester, and forgotten all his good resolutions while he was in

their company, he came home at night in an agony of mind. He did not dare to pray: his conscience stared him in the face; and he became melancholy. The cause of this distemper was more obvious than the cure; and when he was invited one evening to attend a meeting, the father declared he would knock his brains out if he went, though he should be hanged for it. John Oliver knew how little was meant by this threat, and stole away to the sermon. He "drank it in with all his heart;" and having afterwards been informed, by a female disciple, of the manner of her conversion, he was "all in a flame to know these things for himself." So he hastened home, fell to prayer, fancied twice that he heard a voice distinctly saying his sins were forgiven him, and felt, in that instant, that all his load was gone, and that an inexpressible change had been wrought. "I loved God," he says: "I loved all mankind. I could not tell whether I was in the body or out of it. Prayer was turned into wonder, love, and praise." In this state of exaltation he joined the society.

Mr. Oliver was a man of violent temper: he loved his son dearly; and thinking that a boy of sixteen was not emancipated from the obligation of filial obedience, his anger at the course which John persisted in pursuing was strong in proportion to the strength of his affection. He sent to all the Methodists in the town, threatening what he would do if any of them dared receive him into their houses. He tried severity, by the advice of stupid men; and broke not only sticks but chairs upon

him, in his passion. Perceiving that these brutal means were ineffectual, and perhaps inwardly ashamed of them, he reproached his undutiful child with breaking his father's heart, and bringing down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. The distress of the father, and the stubborn resolution of the son, were now matter of public talk in Stockport. Several clergymen endeavoured to convince the lad of his misconduct. One of them, who had been his schoolmaster, called him his child, prayed for him, wept over him, and conjured him, as he loved his own soul, not to go near those people any more. The father, in presence of this clergyman, told his son, that he might attend the church-prayers every day, and should have every indulgence which he could ask, provided he would come no more near those "damned villains," as he called the objects of his violent but not unreasonable prejudice. John's reply was, that he would do every thing in his power to satisfy him as a child to a parent, but that this was a matter of conscience which he could not give up.

Mr. Oliver had good cause for apprehending the worst consequences from that spirit of fanaticism with which the boy was so thoroughly possessed. The disease was advancing rapidly toward a crisis. At this time, his heart was "kept in peace and love all the day long;" and when his band-fellows spoke of the wickedness wich they felt in themselves, he wondered at them, and could discover none in himself. It was not long before he made the discovery. "Having," he says, "given way

to temptation, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God," all his comforts were withdrawn in a moment: "my soul was all over darkness: I could no longer see him that is invisible: I could not feel his influence on my heart: I sought him, but could not find him. I endeavoured to pray, but the heavens seemed like brass: at the same time such a weight came upon me, as if I was instantly to be pressed to death. I sunk into black despair: I found no gleam of light, no trace of hope, no token of any kind for good. The Devil improved this hour of darkness, telling me I was sure to be damned, for I was forsaken of God. Sleep departed from me, and I scarce eat any thing, till I was reduced to a mere skeleton." One morning, being no longer able to endure this misery, and resolving to put an end to his wretched life, he rose very early, and threw himself into the river, in deep water. How he was taken out, and conveyed to the house of a Methodist, he says, is what he never could tell; "unless God sent one of his ministering spirits to help in the time of need." A humbler Christian would have been satisfied with gratefully acknowledging the providence of God: he, however, flattered himself with the supposition of a miracle; and Wesley, many years afterwards, published the account without reprehension or comment. That evening, there was preaching and praying in the house; but, in the morning, "Satan came upon him like thunder," telling him he was a self-murderer; and he attempted to strangle himself with a handkerchief. It was now thought proper to send for Mr. Oliver,

who had been almost distracted all this while, fearing what might so probably have happened to the poor bewildered boy. He took him home, promising to use no severity; for John was afraid to go. A physician was called in, whom Oliver calls an utter stranger to all religion. He bled him largely, physicked him well, and blistered him on the head, back, and feet. It is very possible that the bodily disease required some active treatment: the leaven of the mind was not thus to be worked off. The first time that he was permitted to go out, one of his Methodist friends advised him to elope, seeing that he would not be permitted to serve God at home. He went to Manchester: his mother followed him, and found means to bring him back by force: the father than gave up the contest in despair, and John pursued his own course without further opposition. Now it was, he says, that his strength came again: his light, his life, his God. He began to exhort: soon afterward he fancied himself called to some more public work; and, having passed through the previous stages, was accepted by Wesley upon trial as a travelling preacher. At the year's end he would have gone home, from humility, not from any weariness of his vocation. Wesley's reply was, "You have set your hand to the gospel-plough, therefore never look back! I would have you come up to London this winter. Here is every thing to make the man of God perfect." He accepted the invitation; and had been thirty years an active and successful preacher, when his life and portrait were exhibited in the Arminian Magazine.

Oliver describes himself as having always been of a fearful temper — a temper which is often connected with rashness. During part of his life, he was afflicted with what he calls a scrophulous disorder. A practitioner in Essex, to whom he applied for relief, and who began his practice by prayer, told him his whole mass of blood was corrupted, and advised him to a milk diet: he took daily a quart of milk, with white bread, and two table-spoonfuls of honey. In six months his whole habit of body was changed, and no symptom of the disorder ever appeared afterwards.

JOHN PAWSON was the son of a respectable farmer, who cultivated his own estate, at Thorner, in Yorkshire. His parents were of the Church of England, and gave him a good education according to their means; and though, he says, they were strangers to the life and power of religion, brought him up in the fear of God. The father followed also the trade of a builder, and this son was bred to the same business. The youth knowing the Methodists only by common report, supposed them to be a foolish and wicked people; till happening to hear a person give an account of his wife, who was a Methodist, he conceived a better opinion of them, and felt a wish to hear them. Accordingly he went one evening to their place of meeting; but, when he came to the door, he was ashamed to go in, and so walked round the house, and returned home. This was in his 18th year. He was now employed at Harewood, and fell into profligate company,

who, though they did not succeed in corrupting him, made him dislike Methodism more than ever.

Two sermons, which had been preached at the parish church in Leeds by a methodistical clergyman, were lent to his father when Pawson was about twenty. These fell into his hands, and convinced him that justification by faith was necessary to salvation. He went now to Otley to hear a Methodist preach; and from that hour his course of life was determined. The serious devout behaviour of the people, he says, struck him with a kind of religious awe: the singing greatly delighted him; and the sermon was, to use his own phraseology, "much blest to his soul." He was permitted to stay, and be present at the Society Meeting, and "had cause to bless God for it."

There was nothing wavering in this man's character; he had been morally and religiously brought up; his disposition, from the beginning, was good, and his devotional feelings strong. But his relations were exceedingly offended when he declared himself a Methodist. An uncle, who had promised to be his friend, resolved that he would leave him nothing in his will, and kept the resolution. His parents, and his brother and sisters, supposed him to be totally ruined. Sometimes his father threatened to turn him out of doors, and utterly disown him; but John was his eldest son: he dearly loved him; and this fault, bitterly as he regretted and resented it, was not of a nature to destroy his natural affection. He tried persuasion,

as well as threats; beseeching him not to run wilfully after his own ruin; and his mother frequently wept much on his account. The threat of disinheriting him gave him no trouble; but the danger which he believed their souls were in distressed him sorely. "I did not regard what I suffered," says he, "so my parents might be brought out of their Egyptian darkness." He bought books, and laid them in his father's way, and it was a hopeful symptom that the father read them, although it seemed to no good purpose. The seed, however, had struck root in the family: his brother and some of his sisters were "awakened." The father became more severe with John, as the prime cause of all this mischief: then again he tried mild means, and told him to buy what books he pleased, but besought him not to go to the preachings: he might learn more by reading Mr. Wesley's writings, than by hearing the lay-preachers; and the Methodists, he said, were so universally hated, that it would ruin his character to go among them. It was "hard work" to withstand the entreaties of a good father; and it was not less hard to refrain from what he verily believed essential to his salvation. There was preaching one Sunday near the house, and, in obedience, he kept away; but when it was over, and he saw the people returning home, full of the consolation which they had received, his grief became too strong for him: he went into the garden, and wept bitterly; and, as his emotions became more powerful, retired into a solitary place, and there, he says, bemoaned himself be-

fore the Lord, in such anguish, that he was scarcely able to look up. In this situation his father found him, and took him into the fields to see the grass and corn; but the cheerful images of nature produced no effect upon a mind thus agitated; and the father was grievously troubled, believing verily that his son would run distracted. They returned home in time to attend the Church service; and, in the evening, as was their custom, John read aloud from some religious book, choosing one to his purpose. Seeing that his father approved of what he read, he ventured to speak to him in defence of his principles. The father grew angry, and spoke with bitterness. "I find," said the old man, "thou art now entirely ruined. I have used every means I can think of, but all to no purpose. I rejoiced at thy birth, and I once thought thou wast as hopeful a young man as any in this town; but now I shall have no more comfort in thee so long as I live. Thy mother and I are grown old, and thou makest our lives quite miserable: thou wilt bring down our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Thou intendest to make my house a preaching house, when once my head is laid; but it shall never be thine: no, I will leave all I have to the poor of the parish, before the Methodists shall have any thing to do with it." Pawson was exceedingly affected; and the father seeing this, desired him to promise that he would hear their preaching no more. He replied, when he could speak for weeping, that if he could see a sufficient reason he would make that promise; but not till

then. "Well," replied the old man, "I see thou art quite stupid — I may as well say nothing: the Methodists are the most bewitching people that ever lived; for, when once a person hears them, it is impossible to persuade him to return back again."

Pawson retired from this conversation in great trouble, and was tempted to think that he was guilty of disobeying his parents; but he satisfied himself that he must obey God rather than man. It was a great comfort to him that his brother sympathised with him entirely: they both strove to oblige their parents as much as possible, and took especially care that no business should be neglected for the preaching. This conduct had its effect. They used to pray together in their chamber. The mother, after often listening on the stairs, desired at last to join them; and the father became, in like manner, a listener at first, and afterwards a partaker in these devotions. The minister of the parish now began to apprehend that he should lose the whole family: the way by which he attempted to retain them was neither wise nor charitable; it was by reviling and calumniating the Methodists, and in this manner inflaming the father's wrath against the son. This was Pawson's last trial: perceiving the effect which was thus produced, he wrote a letter to his father, in which, after stating his feelings concerning his own soul, he came to plain arguments, which could not but have their due weight. "What worse am I, in any respect, since I heard the Methodists? Am I disobedient

to you or my mother in any other thing? Do I neglect any part of business?" He asked him also why he condemned the preachers, whom he had never heard. "If you will hear them only three times," said he, "and then prove from the Scripture that they preach contrary thereunto, I will hear them no more." The old man accepted this proposal. The first sermon he liked tolerably well, the second not at all, and the third so much, that he went to hear a fourth, which pleased him better than all the rest. His own mind was now wholly unsettled: he retired one morning into the stable, where nobody might hear or see him, that he might pray without interruption to the Lord; and here such a paroxysm came on, "that he roared for the very disquietness of his soul."—"This," says Pawson, "was a day of glad tidings to me. I now had liberty to cast in my lot with the people of God. My father invited the preachers to his house, and prevented *my* turning it into a preaching house, (as he had formerly said,) by doing it himself. From this time we had preachings in our own house, and all the family joined the Society."

It might have been thought that the proselyte had now obtained his soul's desire; but he had not attained to the new birth: his prayer was, that the Lord would take away his heart of stone, and give him a heart of flesh; and, ere long, as he was "hearing the word" in a neighbouring village, the crisis which he solicited came on. "In the beginning of the service," says he, "the power of God came mightily upon me and many others. All on a

sudden my heart was like melting wax: I cried aloud with an exceeding bitter cry. The arrows of the Almighty stuck fast in my flesh, and the poison of them drank up my spirits; yet, in the height of my distress, I could bless the Lord that he had granted me that which I had so long sought for." It was well that his father had been converted before he reached this stage, or he might with some reason have believed that Methodism had made his son insane. He could take no delight in any thing; his business became a burthen to him; he was quite confused; so that any one, he says, who looked on him, might see in his countenance the distress of his mind, for he was on the very brink of despair. One day he was utterly confounded by hearing that one of his acquaintance had received an assurance of salvation, when he had only heard three sermons; whereas he, who had long waited, was still without comfort. Public thanks were given for this new birth; and Pawson went home from the meeting to give vent to his own grief. As he could not do this in his chamber without disturbing the family, he retired into the barn, where he might perform freely, and there began to pray, and weep, and roar aloud, for his distress was greater than he could well bear. Presently he found that his brother was in another part of the barn, in as much distress as himself. Their cries brought in the father and mother, the elder sister and her husband, and all being in the same condition, they all lamented together. "I suppose," says Pawson, "if some of the good

Christians of the age had seen or heard us, they would have concluded we were all quite beside ourselves." However, "though the children were brought to the birth, there was not strength to bring forth." One Saturday evening, when "there was a mighty shaking among the dry bones" at the meeting, his father received the assurance, and the preacher gave thanks on his account; but Pawson was so far from being able to rejoice with him, that, he says, "his soul sunk as into the belly of hell." On the day following the preacher met the Society, "in order to wrestle with God in behalf of those who were in distress." Pawson went full of sorrow, "panting after the Lord as the hart after the water-brooks." When the prayer for those in distress was made, he placed himself upon his knees in the middle of the room, if possible, in greater anguish of spirit than ever before. Presently a person, whom he knew, "cried for mercy, as if he would rend the very heaven." — "Quickly after, in the twinkling of an eye," says Pawson, "all my trouble was gone, my guilt and condemnation were removed, and I was filled with joy unspeakable. I was brought out of darkness into marvellous light; out of miserable bondage, into glorious liberty; out of the most bitter distress, into unspeakable happiness. I had not the least doubt of my acceptance with God, but was fully assured that he was reconciled to me through the merits of his Son. I was fully satisfied that I was born of God: my justification was so clear to me, that I could neither doubt nor fear."

The lot of the young man was now cast. He was shortly afterwards desired to meet a class: it was a sore trial to him; but obedience was a duty, and he was "obliged to take up the cross." "From the first or second time I met it," he continues, "I continually walked in the light of God's countenance: I served him with an undivided heart. I had no distressing temptations, but had constant power over all sin, so that I lived as upon the borders of heaven." Henceforward his progress was regular. From reading the homilies, and explaining them as he went on, he began to expound the Bible, in his poor manner. The people thrust him into the pulpit. First he became a local preacher, then an itinerant, and, finally a leading personage of the conference, in which he continued a steady and useful member till his death.

ALEXANDER MATHER was a man of cooler temperament and better disciplined mind than most of Wesley's coadjutors. He was the son of a baker, at Brechin, in Scotland: his parents were reputable and religious people: they kept him carefully from evil company, and brought him up in the fear of God: but the father was a rigid and severe man; and probably for this reason, while he was yet a mere boy, (according to his own account not thirteen,) he joined the rebels in 1745. Having escaped from Culloden and the pursuit, he found that his father's doors were closed against him on his return. By his mother's help, however, he

was secreted among their relations for several months, till he thought the danger was over, and ventured a second time to present himself at home. The father, more, perhaps, from cunning, than actual want of feeling, not only again refused him admittance, but went himself and gave information against him to the commanding officer, and the boy would have been sent to prison, if a gentleman of the town had not interfered, and obtained leave for him to lodge in his father's house. The next morning he passed through the form of an examination, and was discharged. From this time he worked at his father's business, till, in the nineteenth year of his age, he thought it advisable to see the world, and therefore travelled southward. The next year he reached London, and there engaged himself as a journeyman baker. Because he was, as he says, a foreigner, his first master was summoned to Guildhall, and compelled to dismiss him. This unjust law was not afterwards enforced against him, and he seems to have had no difficulty in obtaining employment. Before he had been many months in London, a young woman, who had been bred up with him in his father's house, sought him out: they had not met for many years, and this renewal of an old intimacy, in a strange land, soon ended in marriage.

Mather had made a resolution that he would live wholly to God whenever he should marry. For a while he was too happy to remember this resolution: he remembered it when his wife was afflicted with illness: it then lay heavy on his mind that he

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had not performed his vow of praying with her, and yet some kind of false feeling prevented him from opening his heart to her. Day after day the sense of this secret sin increased upon him, till, after loss of appetite and of sleep, and tears by day and night, he "broke through," as he expresses it, and began the practice of praying with her, which from that time was never interrupted. Her education had been a religious one like his, and they did not depart from the way in which they were trained up.

Though Mather had no domestic obstacles to overcome, and never passed through those struggles of mind which, in many of his colleagues, bordered so closely upon madness, he was by no means in a sane state of devotion at this time. It was not sufficient for him to pray by himself every morning and every afternoon with his wife; he sometimes knelt when he was going to bed, and continued in that position till two o'clock, when he was called to his work. The master whom he now served was an attendant at the Foundry, but, like all others of the same trade, he was in the practice of what was called "baking of pans" on a Sunday. Mather regarded this as a breach of the Sabbath: it troubled him so that he could find no peace; and his flesh, he says, consumed away, till the bones were ready to start through his skin. At length, unable to endure this state of mind, he gave his master warning. The master, finding by what motives he was influenced, and that he had not provided himself with another place, was struck

by his conscientious conduct: he went round to all the trade in the neighbourhood, and proposed that they should enter into an agreement not to bake on Sundays. The majority agreed. He advertised for a meeting of master bakers upon the subject; but nothing could be concluded. After all this, which Mather acknowledges was more than he could reasonably expect, he said to him, "I have done all I can, and now I hope you will be content." Mather sincerely thanked him for what he had done, but declared his intention of quitting him, as soon as his master could suit himself with another man. But the master, it seems, took advice at the Foundry, and on the following Sunday staid at home, to tell all his customers that he could bake no more on the Sabbath day. From this time both he and his wife were particularly kind to Mather. They introduced him to the Foundry, and he soon became a regular member of the Society.

It was not long before he had strong impressions upon his mind that he was called to preach. After fasting and praying upon this point, he communicated it to his band, and they set apart some days for the same exercises. This mode of proceeding was not likely to abate his desire; and the band then advised him to speak to Mr. Wesley. Wesley replied, "This is a common temptation among young men. Several have mentioned it to me; but the next thing I hear of them is, that they are married, or upon the point of it." — "Sir," said Mather, "I am married already." Wesley then bade him

not care for the temptation, but seek God by fasting and prayer. He made answer that he had done this; and Wesley recommended patience and perseverance in this course; adding, that he doubted not but God would soon make the way plain before him. Mather could not but understand this as an encouragement: he was the more encouraged, when Wesley shortly afterwards appointed him first to be the leader of a band, and in a little time of a class. In both situations he acquitted himself to the satisfaction of others: his confidence in himself was, of course, increased, and he went once more to Mr. Wesley to represent his ardent aspirations. "To be a Methodist preacher," said Wesley, "is not the way to ease, honour, pleasure, or profit. It is a life of much labour and reproach. They often fare hard — often are in want. They are liable to be stoned, beaten and abused in various manners. Consider this before you engage in so uncomfortable a way of life." The other side of the picture would have been sufficiently tempting, if Mather had been influenced by worldly considerations: the danger was just enough to stimulate enthusiasm: the reproach of strangers would only heighten the estimation in which he would be held by believers: no way of life could be more uncomfortable than his own; and what a preferment in the world for a journeyman baker! The conversation ended, by allowing him to make a trial on the following morning. After a second essay, he received information nearly at ten at night, that he was to preach the next morning at

five o'clock at the Foundry. This was the critical trial. All the time he was making his dough he was engaged in meditation and prayer for assistance. The family were all in bed, and when he had done; he continued praying and reading the Bible to find a text till two o'clock. It was then time to call his fellow servant, and they went to work together as usual till near four, preparing the bread for the oven. His comrade then retired to bed, and he to his prayers, till a quarter before five, when he went, in fear and trembling, to the meeting, still unprepared even with a text. He took up the hymn-book, and gave out the hymn, in a voice so faint, because of his timidity, that it could not be understood. The people, not hearing the verse, knew not what to sing: he was no singer himself, otherwise he might have recovered this mishap by leading them, —so they were at a stand, and this increased his agitation so much, that his joints shook. However, he recovered himself, and took the text upon which he opened. The matter after this was left to Mr. Wesley, to employ him as his business would permit, just when and where he pleased. When first he began to preach, there was a considerable natural defect in his delivery; and he spoke with such extreme quickness, that very few could understand him: but he entirely overcame this.

The account of the exertions in which this zealous labourer was now engaged, may best be related in his own words. He says, "In a little time I was more employed than my strength would

well allow. I had no time for preaching but what I took from my sleep; so that I frequently had not eight hours sleep in a week. This, with hard labour, constant abstemiousness, and frequent fasting, brought me so low, that, in a little more than two years, I was hardly able to follow my business. My master was often afraid I should kill myself: and perhaps his fear was not groundless. I have frequently put off my shirts as wet with sweat as if they had been dipt in water. After hastening to finish my business abroad, I have come home all in a sweat in the evening, changed my clothes, and ran to preach at one or another chapel; then walked or ran back, changed my clothes, and gone to work at ten, wrought hard all night, and preached at five the next morning. I ran back to draw the bread at a quarter, or half an hour past six; wrought hard in the bake-house till eight; then hurried about with bread till the afternoon, and perhaps at night set off again."

Had this mode of life continued long, Mather must have fallen a victim to his zeal. He was probably saved by being appointed a travelling preacher; yet, at the very commencement of his itinerancy, his course had been nearly cut short. A mob attacked him at Boston; and when, with great difficulty and danger, he reached his inn, bruised, bleeding, and covered with blood, the rabble beset the house, and the landlord attempted to turn him out, for fear they should pull it down. Mather, however, knew the laws, and was not wanting to himself. "Sir," he said, "I am in

your house; but, while I use it as an inn, it is mine — turn me out at your peril." And he compelled him to apply to a magistrate for protection. It was more than twelve months before he recovered from the brutal treatment which he received on this occasion. The mob at Wolverhampton pulled down a preaching house: an attorney had led them on, and made the first breach himself. Mather gave him his choice of rebuilding it at his own expence, or being tried for his life: of course the house was rebuilt, and there were no further riots at Wolverhampton. He was of a hardy constitution and strong mind, cool and courageous, zealous and disinterested, most tender-hearted and charitable, but possessing withal a large share of prudence, which enabled him to conduct the temporal affairs of the Connection with great ability. The account which, in his matured and sober mind, he gives of his experience, touching what Wesley calls the great salvation, bears with it fewer marks of enthusiasm, and more of meditation, than is usually found in such cases. "What I experienced in my own soul," he says, "was an instantaneous deliverance from all those wrong tempers and affections which I had long and sensibly groaned under; an entire disengagement from every creature, with an entire devotedness to God; and from that moment I found an unspeakable pleasure in doing the will of God in all things. I had also a power to do it, and the constant approbation both of my own conscience and of God. I had simplicity of heart, and a single eye to God at

all times and in all places, with such a fervent zeal for the glory of God and the good of souls, as swallowed up every other care and consideration. Above all, I had uninterrupted communion with God, whether sleeping or waking." It is scarcely compatible with human weakness, that a state like this should be permanent; and Mather, in describing it, after an interval of more than twenty years, exclaims, "Oh that it were with me as when the candle of the Lord thus shone upon my head!" Yet he had not failed in his course; and, after much reflection, and the surer aid of prayer, had calmly satisfied his clear judgment, "that deliverance from sin does not imply deliverance from human infirmities; and that it is not inconsistent with temptations of various kinds."

THOMAS OLIVERS was born at Tregonan, a village in Montgomeryshire, in the year 1725. Being left an orphan in childhood, with some little property, he was placed under the care of the husband of his father's first cousin; which remote relationship comes under the comprehensive term of a Welsh uncle. Mr. Tudor, as this person was called, was an eminent farmer, and did his duty by the boy; giving him not merely the common school education, but bestowing more than common pains in imparting religious acquirements. He was taught to sing psalms, as well as repeat his catechism and his prayers, and to attend church twice on the Sabbath day. But the parish happened to be in a state of shocking immorality: —

there was one man, in particular, who studied the art of cursing, and would exemplify the richness of the Welsh language, by compounding twenty or thirty words into one long and horrid blasphemy. As this was greatly admired among his profligate companions, Olivers imitated it, and in time rivalled what he calls his infernal instructor. The other parts of his conduct were in the same spirit; and he obtained the character of being the worst boy who had been known in that country for the last thirty years. "When he was about three or four and twenty he left the country, not having half learned the business to which he had been apprenticed. The cause of his departure was the outcry raised against him for his conduct toward a farmer's daughter: he was the means, he says, of driving her almost to an untimely end. It was the sin which lay heaviest on his mind, both before and after his conversion; and which, as long as he lived, he remembered with peculiar shame and sorrow.

He removed to Shrewsbury, and there, or in its neighbourhood, continued a profligate course of life, till poverty, as well as conscience, stared him in the face. He said within himself, that he was living a most wretched life, and that the end must be damnation, unless he repented and forsook his sins. But how should he acquire strength for this? For he had always gone to church, and he had often prayed and resolved against his evil practices, and yet his resolutions were weak as water. So he thought of "trying what the sacrament would

do;" and borrowing, accordingly, the book called A Week's Preparation, he went regularly through it, and read daily upon his knees the meditations and prayers for the day. On the Sunday he went to the Lord's table, and spent the following week in going over the second part of the book, as devoutly as he had done the first. During this fortnight he "kept tolerably clear of sin;" but when the course of regimen was over, the effect ceased: he returned the book with many thanks, and fell again into his vicious courses. Ere long he was seized with a violent fever; and when his life was despaired of, was restored, as he believed, by the skill of a journeyman apothecary, who, being a Methodist, attended him for charity. His recovery brought with it a keen but transitory repentance. This was at Wrexham. Here he and one of his companions committed an act of arch-villainy, and decamped in consequence; Olivers leaving several debts behind him, and the other running away from his apprenticeship. They travelled as far as Bristol; and there Olivers, learning that Mr. Whitefield was to preach, resolved to go and hear what he had to say; because he had often heard of Whitefield, and had sung songs about him. He went, and was too late. Determined to be soon enough on the following evening, he went three hours before the time. When the sermon began, he did little but look about him; but seeing tears trickle down the cheeks of some who stood near, he became more attentive. The text was, "*Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?*"

"When the sermon began," says this fiery-minded Welshman, "I was certainly a dreadful enemy to God, and to all that is good: and one of the most profligate and abandoned young men living." Before it was ended, he became a new creature: a clear view of redemption was set before him, and his own conscience gave him clear conviction of its necessity. The heart, he says, was broken; nor could he express the strong desires which he felt for righteousness. They led him to effectual resolutions: he broke off all his evil practices, forsook all his wicked companions, and gave himself up with all his heart to God. He was now almost incessantly in tears: he was constant in attending worship, wherever it was going on; and describes his feelings during a *Te Deum* at the cathedral, as if he had done with earth, and was praising God before his throne. He bought the Week's Preparation, and read it upon his knees day and night; and so constant was he in prayer, and in this position, that his knees became stiff, and he was actually, for a time, lame in consequence. "So earnest was I," he says, "that I used, by the hour together, to wrestle with all the might of my body and soul, till I almost expected to die on the spot. What with bitter cries, (unheard by any but God and myself,) together with torrents of tears, which were almost continually trickling down my cheeks, my throat was often dried up, as David says, and my eyes literally failed, while I waited for God!" He used to follow Whitefield in the streets, with such veneration, that

he could "scarce refrain from kissing the very prints of his feet."

Here he would fain have become a member of the Society; but when, with much timidity, he made his wishes known to one of Mr. Whitefield's ministers, the preacher, for some unexplained reason, thought proper to discourage him. After a few months, Olivers removed to Bradford, and there, for a long time, attended the preaching of the Methodists; and when the public service was over, and he, with the uninitiated, was shut out, he would go into the field at the back of the preaching house, and listen while they were singing, and weep bitterly at the thought that, while God's people were thus praising his name, he, a poor wretched fugitive, was not permitted to be among them. And, though he compared himself to one of the foolish virgins, when they came out the would walk behind them for the sake of catching a word of their religious conversation. This conduct, and his regular attendance, at last attracted notice: he was asked if it was his wish to join the Society, and receive a note of admission from the preacher. His rebuff at Bristol had discouraged him from applying for what might so easily have been obtained; and the longing for the admission had produced a state of mind little different from insanity. Returning home, now that he possessed it, and exhilarated, or even intoxicated with joy, he says, that as he came to the bottom of the hill, at the entrance of the town, a ray of light, resembling the shining of a star, descended through a small

opening in the heaven, and instantaneously shone upon him. In that instant his burden fell off, and he was so elevated, that he felt as if he could literally fly away to heaven. A shooting star might easily produce this effect upon a man so agitated: for trifles, light as air, will act as strongly upon enthusiasm as upon jealousy; and never was any man in a state of higher enthusiasm than Olivers at this time. He says, that in every thought, intention, or desire, his constant enquiry was, whether it was to the glory of God; and that, if he could not answer in the affirmative, he dared not indulge it: that he received his daily food nearly in the same manner as he did the sacrament: that he used mental prayer daily and hourly; and for a while his rule was in this manner, to employ five minutes out of every quarter of an hour. "Upon the whole," he pursues, "I truly lived by faith. I saw God in every thing: the heavens, the earth, and all therein, showed me something of him; yea, even from a drop of water, a blade of grass, or a grain of sand, I often received instruction."

He soon became desirous of "telling the world what God had done for him;" and having communicated this desire to his band-fellows, they kept a day of solemn fasting on the occasion, and then advised him to make a trial. Many approved of his gifts: others were of opinion that he ought to be more established, and was too earnest to hold it long. When he began to preach, his custom was, to get all his wordly business done, clean himself,

and put out his Sunday's apparel on Saturday night, which sometimes was not accomplished before midnight: afterwards he sat up reading, praying, and examining himself, till one or two in the morning: he rose at four, or never later than five, and went two miles into the country, through all weather, to meet a few poor people, from six till seven. By eight he returned to Bradford, to hear the preaching; then went seven miles on foot to preach at one; three or four farther to hold forth at five; and, after all, had some five or six more to walk on his return. And as the preaching was more exhausting than the exercise, he was often so wearied, that he could scarcely get over a stile, or go up into his chamber when he got home.

When he had been a local preacher about twelve months, the small-pox broke out at Bradford, and spread like a pestilence: scarce a single person escaped; and six or seven died daily. Olivers was seized with it the first week in October: heating things were given him by an ignorant old woman; and when some charitable person sent an experienced physician to visit him, the physician declared that, in the course of fifty years' practice, he had never seen so severe a case. He was blind for five weeks. The room in which he lay was so offensive, that those who went out of it infected the streets as they past. He was not able to rise that his bed might be made till New-year's day; yet, during the whole time, he never uttered a groan or a single complaint: "thus evincing," as

he says, "that no suffering is too great for the grace of God to enable us to bear with resignation and quietness."

This long illness increased the number of his debts, which were numerous enough before his conversion. As soon, therefore, as he had gained sufficient strength for the journey, he set off for Montgomeryshire, to receive his little property, which had hitherto remained in Mr. Tudor's hands. The thorough change which had been effected in so notorious a reprobate, astonished all who knew him: when they saw him riding far and near, in search of all persons to whom he was indebted, and faithfully making payment of what the creditors never expected to recover, they could not doubt the sincerity of his reformation, and they ascribed it to the grace of God. Tudor explained the matter in a way more satisfactory to himself, because he could comprehend it better: he said to Olivers, "Thou hast been so wicked that thou hast seen the Devil." Having paid his debts in his own country, he returned by way of Bristol to Bradford, discharged, in like manner, his accounts in both these places, and being now clear of the world, and thereby delivered from a burden which had cost him, as he says, many prayers and tears, he set up business with the small remains of his money, and with a little credit; but, before he was half settled, Wesley exhorted him to free himself from all such engagements, and make the work of the gospel his sole pursuit. The advice of the master was a law to the obedient disciple. Olivers *dis-*

posed of his effects, wound up his affairs, and prepared to itinerate in the West of England. "But I was not able," he says, "to buy another horse; and therefore, with my boots on my legs, my great coat on my back, and my saddle-bags, with my books and linen, across my shoulder, I set out in October 1753."

Wesley, when he was not the dupe of his own imagination, could read the characters of men with a discriminating eye. He was not deceived in Olivers: the daring disposition, the fiery temper, and the stubbornness of this Welshman, were now subdued and disciplined into an intrepidity, an ardour, and a perseverance, which were the best requisites for his vocation. It was not long before one of his congregation at Tiverton, presented him with the price of a horse, as well suited to him as Bucephalus to Alexander; for he was as tough and as indefatigable as his master. Indeed the beast, as if from sympathy, made the first advances, by coming up to him in a field where he was walking with the owner, and laying his nose upon his shoulder. Pleased with this familiarity, Olivers stroked the colt, which was then about two years and a half old; and finding that the farmer would sell him for five pounds, struck the bargain. "I have kept him," he says in his memoirs, "to this day, which is about twenty-five years, and on him I have travelled comfortably not less than an hundred thousand miles." On one occasion both he and his horse were exposed to a service of some danger at Yarmouth. The mob of that town had

sworn, that if any Methodist came there, he should never return alive. Olivers, however, being then stationed at Norwich, was resolved to try the experiment, and accordingly set out with a companion, who was in no encouraging state of mind, but every now and then exclaimed upon the road, "I shall be murdered, and go to hell this day; for I know not the Lord." With this unhappy volunteer for martyrdom, Olivers entered Yarmouth; and having first attended service in the church, went into the market-place and gave out a hymn. The people collected, and listened with tolerable quietness while he sung and prayed; but, as soon as he had taken his text, they began so rude a comment upon the sermon, that one of his friends prudently pulled him down from his perilous stand, and retreated with him into a house, in one of those remarkable streets which are peculiar to Yarmouth, and are called Rows; and which are so narrow, that two long-armed persons may almost shake hands across from the windows. Though Olivers had rashly thrust himself into this adventure, he was prudent enough now to withdraw from it, and accordingly he sent for his horse. The mob recognized the animal, followed him, and filled the row. To wait till they dispersed might have been inconvenient; and perhaps they might have attacked the house; so he came forth, mounted resolutely, and making use of his faithful roadster as a charger on this emergence, forced the rabble before him through the row; but the women, on either side, stood in the door-ways, some with

bowls of water, others with both hands full of dirt, to salute him as he passed. Having rode the gauntlet here, and got into the open street, a tremendous battery of stones, sticks, apples, turnips, potatoes, and other such varieties of mob ammunition, was opened upon him and his poor comrade: the latter clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped out of town: Olivers proceeded more calmly, and watching the sticks and stones which came near, so as to ward them off, and evade the blow, preserved, as he says, a regular retreat.

Olivers was more likely led into this danger by a point of honour, than by any natural rashness; for, that he had acquired a considerable share of sound worldly prudence, appears from the curious account which he has given of his deliberation concerning marriage. Setting out, he says, with a conviction that in this important concern "young people did not consult reason and the will of God, so much as their own foolish inclinations," he enquired of himself, in the first place, whether he was called to marry at that time; and having settled that question in the affirmative, the next enquiry was, what sort of a person ought he to marry? The remainder is too extraordinary and too characteristic to be given in any words but his own: — "To this I answered in general, such a one as Christ would choose for me, suppose he was on earth, and was to undertake that business. I then asked, but what sort of a person have I reason to believe he would choose for me? Here I fixed on the following properties, and ranged them in the

following order: The first was grace: I was quite certain that no preacher of God's word ought, on any consideration, to marry one who is not eminently gracious. Secondly, she ought to have tolerable good common sense: a Methodist preacher, in particular, who travels into all parts, and sees such a variety of company, ought not to take a fool with him. Thirdly, as I knew the natural warmth of my own temper, I concluded that a wise and gracious God would not choose a companion for ME who would throw oil, but rather water upon the fire. Fourthly, I judged that, as I was connected with a poor people, the will of God was, that whoever I married should have a small competency, to prevent her being chargeable to any." He then proceeds to say, that, upon the next step in the enquiry, who is the person in whom these properties are found? he immediately turned his eyes on Miss Green, "a person of a good family, and noted for her extraordinary piety." He opened his mind to her, consulted Mr. Wesley, married her; and having, "in this affair, consulted reason and the will of God so impartially, had abundant reason to be thankful ever afterwards."

The small-pox had shaken his constitution: for eight years after that dreadful illness his health continually declined; and he was thought to be far advanced in consumption when he was appointed to the York circuit, where he had to take care of sixty societies, and ride about three hun-

dred miles every six weeks. Few persons thought it possible that he could perform the journey once; but, he said, I am determined to go as far as I can, and when I can go no farther, I will turn back. By the time he had got half round, the exercise, and perhaps the frequent change of air, restored, in some degree, his appetite, and improved his sleep; and, before he reached the end, he had begun to recover flesh: but it was twelve years before he felt himself a hale man. The few fits of dejection with which he was troubled, seem to have originated more in bodily weakness than in the temper of his mind. One instance is curious, for the way in which it affected others. While he was dining one day about noon, a thought came over him, that he was not called to preach; the food, therefore, with which he was then served, did not belong to him, and he was a thief and a robber in eating it. He burst into tears, and could eat no more; and having to officiate at one o'clock, went to the preaching house, weeping all the way He went weeping into the pulpit, and wept sorely while he gave out the hymn, and while he prayed, and while he preached. A sympathetic emotion spread through the congregation, which made them receive the impression like melted wax: many of them "cried aloud for the disquietness of their souls;" and Olivers, who, looking as usual for supernatural agency in every thing, had supposed the doubt of his own qualifications to be produced by the tempter, believed now that the Lord had brought much good out of that temptation.

After serving many years as a travelling preacher, he was fixed in London as the manager of Mr. Wesley's printing; an occupation which did not interfere with his preaching, but made him stationary. He never laboured harder in his life, he says; and finding it good both for body and soul, he hoped to be fully employed as long as he lived. Well might this man, upon reviewing his own eventful history, bless God for the manifold mercies which he had experienced, and look upon the Methodists as the instruments of his deliverance from sin and death.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JOHN HAIME. — SAMPSON STANIFORTH. — GEORGE STORY.

Among the memoirs of his more eminent preachers, which Wesley published in his magazine, as written by themselves for general edification, is "A short Account of God's Dealings with Mr. John Haime." Satan has so much to do in the narrative, that this is certainly a misnomer. It is accompanied by his portrait, taken when he was seventy years of age. What organs a craniologist might have detected under his brown wig it is impossible to say, but Lavater himself would never have discovered in those mean and common features, the turbulent mind, and passionate fancy, which belonged to them. Small inexpressive eyes, scanty eye-brows, and a short, broad, vulgar nose, in a face of ordinary proportions, seem to mark out a subject who would have been content to travel a jog-trot along the high-road of mortality, and have looked for no greater delight than that of smoking and boozing in the chimney-corner. And yet John Haime passed his whole life in a continued spiritual ague.

He was born at Shaftesbury in 1710, and bred up to his father's employment, of gardening. Not liking this, he tried button-making; but no occu-

pation pleased him: and indeed he appears, by his own account, to have been in a state little differing from insanity; or differing from it in this only, that he had sufficient command of himself not to communicate the miserable imaginations by which he was tormented. He describes himself as undutiful to his parents, addicted to cursing, swearing, lying, and Sabbath-breaking; tempted with blasphemous thoughts, and perpetually in fear of the Devil, so that he could find no comfort in working, eating, drinking, or even in sleeping. "The Devil," he says, "broke in upon me with reasonings concerning the being of a God, till my senses were almost gone. He then so strongly tempted me to blaspheme, that I could not withstand. He then told me, 'Thou art inevitably damned;' and I readily believed him. This made me sink into despair, as a stone into the mighty water. I now began to wander about by the river side, and through woods and solitary places; many times looking up to heaven with a heart ready to break, thinking I had no part there. I thought every one happy but myself, the Devil continually telling me there was no mercy for me. I cried for help, but found no relief; so I said there is no hope, and gave the reins to my evil desires, not caring which end went foremost, but giving up myself to wicked company and all their evil ways. And I was hastening on, when the great tremendous God met me as a lion in the way, and his holy Spirit, whom I had been so long grieving, returned with greater force than ever. I had no rest day or night. I was

afraid to go to bed, lest the Devil should fetch me away before morning. I was afraid to shut my eyes, lest I should awake in hell. I was terrified when asleep; sometimes dreaming that many devils were in the room ready to take me away; sometimes that the world was at an end. At other times I thought I saw the world on fire, and the wicked left to burn therein, with myself amongst them; and when I awoke, my senses were almost gone. I was often on the point of destroying myself, and was stopped, I know not how. Then did I weep bitterly: I moaned like a dove, I chattered like a swallow."

He relates yet more violent paroxysms than these; how, having risen from his knees, upon a sudden impulse that he would not pray, nor be beholden to God for mercy, he passed the whole night as if his very body had been in a fire, and hell within him; thoroughly persuaded that the Devil was in the room, and fully expecting every moment that he would be let loose upon him. He says, that in an excess of blasphemous frenzy, having a stick in his hand, he threw it towards heaven against God with the utmost enmity; and, he says, that this act was followed by what he supposed to be a supernatural appearance: that immediately he saw, in the clear sky, a creature like a swan, but much larger, part black, part brown, which flew at him, went just over his head, and lighting on the ground, at about forty yards' distance, stood staring upon him. The reader must not suppose this to be mere fiction; what he saw was certainly a bustard, whose nest was near; but

Wesley publishes the story as Haime wrote it, without any qualifying word or observation, and doubtless believed it as it was written. Had this poor man been a Romanist, he would have found beads and holy water effectual amulets in such cases: anodynes would have been the best palliatives in such a disease; and he might have been cured through the imagination, when no remedy could be applied to the understanding.

In this extraordinary state of mind he forsook his wife and children, and enlisted in the Queen's regiment of dragoons. The life which John Bunyan wrote of himself, under the title of "Grace abounding to the Chief of Sinners," now fell into his hands. He read it with the deepest attention, finding that the case nearly resembled his own: he thought it the best book he had ever seen; and it gave him some hope of mercy. "In every town where we staid," says he, "I went to church; but I did not hear what I wanted: Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world! Being come to Alnwick, Satan desired to have me, that he might sift me as wheat. And the hand of the Lord came upon me with such weight, as made me roar for very anguish of spirit. Many times I stopt in the street, afraid to go one step farther, lest I should step into hell. I now read and fasted, and went to church, and prayed seven times a day. One day, as I walked by the Tweed side, I cried out aloud, being all athirst for God, Oh that thou wouldst hear my prayer, and let my cry come up before thee! The Lord heard: he sent a gracious

answer: he lifted me up out of the dungeon; he took away all my sorrow and fear, and filled my soul with peace and joy. The stream glided sweetly along, and all nature seemed to rejoice with me." But left as he was, wholly to his own diseased imagination, the hot and cold fits succeeded each other with little interval of rest. Being sent to London with the camp-equipage, he went to hear one of Whitefield's preachers, and ventured, as he was coming back from the meeting, to tell him the distress of his soul. The preacher, whose charity seems to have been upon a par with his wisdom, made answer, "The work of the Devil is upon you," and rode away. "It was of the tender mercies of God," says poor Haime, "that I did not put an end to my life."

"Yet," he says, "I thought if I must be damned myself, I will do what I can that others may be saved; so I began to reprove open sin wherever I saw or heard it, and to warn the ungodly that, if they did not repent, they would surely perish: but, if I found any that were weary and heavy laden, I told them to wait upon the Lord, and he would renew their strength; yet I found no strength myself." He was, however, lucky enough to hear Charles Wesley, at Colchester, and to consult him when the service was over. Wiser than the Calvinistic preacher, Charles Wesley encouraged him, and bade him go on without fear, and not be dismayed at any temptation. These words sank deep, and were felt as a blessing to him for many years. His regiment was now

ordered to Flanders; and writing from thence to Wesley for comfort and counsel, he was exhorted to persevere in his calling. "It is but a little thing," said Wesley, "that man should be against you, while you know God is on your side. If he give you any companion in the narrow way, it is well; and it is well if he does not: but by all means miss no opportunity — speak and spare not: declare what God has done for your soul: regard not worldly prudence. Be not ashamed of Christ, or of his word, or of his work, or of his servants. Speak the truth in love, even in the midst of a crooked generation."—"I did speak," he says, "and not spare." He was in the battle of Dettingen, and being then in a state of hope, he describes himself as in the most exalted and enviable state of mind, while, during seven hours, he stood the fire of the enemy. He was in a new world, and his heart was filled with love, peace, and joy more than tongue could express. His faith, as well as his courage, was put to the trial, and both were found proof.

Returning into Flanders to take up their winter quarters, as they marched beside the Maine, they "saw the dead men lie in the river, and on the banks, as dung for the earth: for many of the French, attempting to pass the river after the bridge had been broken, had been drowned, and cast ashore where there was none to bury them." During the winter, he found two soldiers who agreed to take a room with him, and meet every night to pray and read the Scriptures: others soon joined them; a society was formed; and Methodism

was organized in the army with great success. There were three hundred in the society, and six preachers beside Haime. As soon as they were settled in a camp, they built a tabernacle. He had generally a thousand hearers, officers as well as common soldiers; and he found means of hiring others to do his duty, that he might have more leisure for carrying on the spiritual war. He frequently walked between twenty and thirty miles a-day, and preached five times a-day for a week together. "I had three armies against me," he says: "the French army, the wicked English army, and an army of Devils; but I feared them not." It was not, indeed, likely that he should go on without some difficulties, his notions of duty not being always perfectly in accordance with the established rules of military discipline. An officer one day asked him what he preached; and as Haime mentioned certain sins which he more particularly denounced, and which perhaps touched the enquirer a little too closely, the officer swore at him, and said, that, if it were in his power, he would have him flogged to death. "Sir," replied Haime, "you have a commission over men; but I have a commission from God to tell you, you must either repent of your sins, or perish everlastingly." His commanding officer asked him how he came to preach; and being answered, that the Spirit of God constrained him to call his fellow-sinners to repentance, told him, that then he must restrain that spirit. Haime replied, he would die first. It is to the honour of his officers that they manifested

no serious displeasure at language like this. His conduct toward one of his comrades might have drawn upon him much more unpleasant consequences. This was a reprobate fellow, who finding a piece of money, after some search, which he thought he had lost, threw it on the table, and exclaimed, "There is my ducat; but no thanks to God, any more than to the Devil." Haime wrote down the words, and brought him to a court-martial. Being then asked what he had to say against him, he produced the speech in writing; and the officer having read it, demanded if he was not ashamed to take account of such matters. "No, Sir," replied the enthusiast; "if I had heard such words spoken against His Majesty King George, would not you have counted me a villain if I had concealed them?" The only corporal pain to which officers were subjected by our martial law, was for this offence. Till the reign of Queen Anne, they were liable to have their tongues bored with a hot iron; and, mitigated as the law now was, it might still have exposed the culprit to serious punishment, if the officer had not sought to end the matter as easily as he could; and therefore, after telling the soldier that he was worthy of death, by the laws of God and man, asked the prosecutor what he wished to have done; giving him thus an opportunity of atoning, by a little discretion, for the excess of his zeal. Haime answered, that he only desired to be parted from him; and thus it terminated. It was well for him that this man was not of a malicious temper, or he might easily have made the

zealot be regarded by all his fellows in the odious light of a persecutor and an informer.

While he was quartered at Bruges, General Ponsonby granted him the use of the English church, and by help of some good singing, they brought together a large congregation. In the ensuing spring the battle of Fontenoy was fought. The Methodist soldiers were at this time wrought up to a high pitch of fanatacism. One of them being fully prepossessed with a belief that he should fall in the action, danced for joy before he went into it; exclaiming, that he was going to rest in the bosom of Jesus. Others, when mortally wounded, broke out into rapturous expressions of hope and assured triumph, at the near prospect of dissolution. Haime himself was under the not less comfortable persuasion that the French had no ball made which would kill him that day. His horse was killed under him. "Where is your God now, Haime?" said an officer, seeing him fall. "Sir, he is here with me," replied the soldier, "and he will bring me out of the battle." Before Haime could extricate himself from the horse, which was lying upon him, a cannon ball took off the officer's head. Three of his fellow-preachers were killed in this battle, a fourth went to the hospital, having both arms broken; the other two began to preach the pleasant doctrine of Antinomianism, and professed that they were always happy; in which one of them, at least, was sincere, being frequently drunk twice a day. Many months had not passed before Haime himself relapsed

into his old miserable state. "I was off my watch," he says, "and fell by a grievous temptation. It came as quick as lightning. I knew not if I was in my senses; but I fell, and the Spirit of God departed from me. Satan was let loose, and followed me by day and by night. The agony of my mind weighed down my body, and threw me into a bloody flux. I was carried to an hospital, just dropping into hell: but the Lord upheld me, with an unseen hand, quivering over the great gulf. Before my fall, my sight was so strong, that I could look stedfastly on the sun at noon-day; but, after it, I could not look a man in the face, nor bear to be in any company. The roads, the hedges, the trees, every thing seemed cursed of God. Nature appeared void of God, and in the possession of the Devil. The fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, all appeared in a league against me. I was one day drawn out into the woods, lamenting my forlorn state, and on a sudden I began to weep bitterly: from weeping I fell to howling, like a wild beast, so that the woods resounded; yet could I say, notwithstanding my bitter cry, my stroke is heavier than my groaning; nevertheless, I could not say, 'Lord have mercy upon me!' if I might have purchased heaven thereby. Very frequently Judas was represented to me as hanging just before me. So great was the displeasure of God against me, that he, in great measure, took away the sight of my eyes: I could not see the sun for more than eight months: even in the clearest summer day, it always appeared to me like a mass of blood.

At the same time I lost the use of my knees. I could truly say, 'Thou hast sent fire into my bones.' I was often as hot as if I was burning to death: many times I looked to see if my clothes were not on fire. I have gone into a river to cool myself; but it was all the same; for what could quench the wrath of his indignation that was let loose upon me? At other times, in the midst of summer, I have been so cold, that I knew not how to bear it: all the clothes I could put on had no effect; but my flesh shivered, and my very bones quaked."

As a mere physical case, this would be very curious; but, as a psychological one, it is of the highest interest. For seven years he continued in this miserable state, without one comfortable hope, "angry at God, angry at himself, angry at the Devil," and fancying himself possessed with more devils than Mary Magdalene. Only while he was preaching to others (for he still continued to preach) his distress was a little abated. "Some may enquire," says he, "what could move me to preach while I was in such a forlorn condition? They must ask of God, for I cannot tell. After some years I attempted again to pray. With this Satan was not well pleased; for one day, as I was walking alone, and faintly crying for mercy, suddenly such a hot blast of brimstone flashed in my face, as almost took away my breath; and presently after an invisible power struck up my heels, and threw me violently upon my face. One Sunday I went to church in Holland, when the Lord's Supper was to be administered. I had a great desire

to partake of it; but the enemy came in like a flood to hinder me, pouring in temptations of every kind. I resisted him with my might, till, through the agony of my mind, the blood gushed out at my mouth and nose. However, I was enabled to conquer, and to partake of the blessed elements. I was much distressed with dreams and visions of the night. I dreamt one night that I was in hell; another, that I was on Mount Etna; that, on a sudden, it shook and trembled exceedingly; and that, at last, it split asunder in several places, and sunk into the burning lake, all but that little spot on which I stood. Oh, how thankful was I for my preservation! — I thought that I was worse than Cain. In rough weather it was often suggested to me 'this is on *your* account! See, the earth is cursed for *your* sake; and it will be no better till you are in hell!' Often did I wish that I had never been converted: often, that I had never been born. Yet I preached every day, and endeavoured to appear open and free to my brethren. I encouraged them that were tempted. I thundered out the terrors of the law against the ungodly. I was often violently tempted to curse and swear before and after, and even while I was preaching. Sometimes, when I was in the midst of the congregation, I could hardly refrain from laughing aloud; yea, from uttering all kind of ribaldry and filthy conversation. Frequently, as I was going to preach, the Devil has set upon me as a lion, telling me he would have me just then, so that it has thrown me into a cold sweat. In this agony I have

caught hold of the Bible, and read, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous!' I have said to the enemy, 'This is the word of God, and thou canst not deny it!' Thereat he would be like a man that shrunk back from the thrust of a sword. But he would be at me again. I again met him in the same way; till at last, blessed be God! he fled from me. And even in the midst of his sharpest assaults, God gave me just strength enough to bear them. When he has strongly suggested, just as I was going to preach, 'I will have thee at last,' I have answered, (sometimes with too much anger,) 'I will have another out of thy hand first!' And many, while I was myself in the deep, were truly convinced and converted to God."

Having returned to England, and obtained his discharge from the army, he was admitted by Mr. Wesley as a travelling preacher. This, however, did not deliver him from his miserable disease of mind: he could neither be satisfied with preaching nor without it: wherever he went he was not able to remain, but was continually wandering to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none. "I thought," he says, "if David or Peter had been living, they would have pitied me." Wesley, after a while, took him as a companion in one of his rounds, knowing his state of mind, and knowing how to bear with it, and to manage it. "It was good for him," he said, "to be in the fiery furnace: he should be purified therein, but not consumed." Year after year he continued in this

extraordinary state, till, in the year 1766, he was persuaded by Mr. Wesley to go and dwell with a person at St. Ives, in Cornwall, who wanted a worn-out preacher to live with him, take care of his family, and pray with him morning and evening. Here he was, if possible, ten times worse than before; and it seemed to him, that, unless he got some relief, he must die in despair. "One day," he says, "I retired into the hall, fell on my face, and cried for mercy; but got no answer. I got up, and walked up and down the room, wringing my hands, and crying like to break my heart; begging of God, for Christ's sake, if there was any mercy for me, to help me; and, blessed be his name, all on a sudden, I found such a change through my soul and body, as is past description. I was afraid I should alarm the whole house with the expressions of my joy. I had a full witness from the Spirit of God that I should not find that bondage any more. Glory be to God for all his mercy." Twenty years the disease had continued upon him; and it now left him, by his own account, as instantaneously as it came: and his account is credible; for he acknowledges that he had not the same faith as in his former state: the age of rapture was over, and the fierceness of his disposition was spent, though its restlessness was unabated. Though his chaplainship with Mr. Hoskins had every thing which could render such a situation comfortable, he could not be at ease till he was again in motion, and had resumed his itinerant labours. He lived till the great age of

seventy-eight, and died of a fever, which was more than twelve months consuming him, and which wore him to the bone before he went to rest. But though his latter days were pain, they were not sorrow. "He preached as long as he was able to speak, and longer than he could stand without support." Some of his last words were, "O Lord, in thee have I trusted, and have not been confounded;" and he expired in full confidence that a convoy of angels were ready to conduct his soul to the paradise of God.

Whatever may be thought of John Haime's qualifications for preaching the gospel, there was one man at least who had reason to bless him as his greatest earthly benefactor: this was Sampson Staniforth, who served at the same time as a private in the army. He was the son of a cutler at Sheffield, and grew up without any moral or religious instruction, so that he had "no fear of God before his eyes, no thought of his providence, of his saving mercy, nor indeed of his having any thing to do with the world." Why he was born into the world, what was his business in it, or where he was to go when this life was over, were considerations, he says, which never entered into his mind; and he grew up in a course of brutal vices, being as utterly without God in the world as the beasts that perish. He describes himself as not only fierce and passionate, but also sullen and malicious, without any feeling of humanity; and disposed, instead of weeping with those who wept, to rejoice in their sufferings. This hopeful subject

enlisted as a soldier at the age of nineteen, in spite of the tears and entreaties of his mother; and, after some hair-breadth escapes from situations into which he was led by his own rashness and profligacy, he joined the army in Germany a few days after the battle of Dettingen. While they were encamped at Worms, orders were read at the head of every regiment, that no soldier should go above a mile from the camp on pain of death, which was to be executed immediately, without the forms of a court-martial. This did not deter Staniforth from straggling; and he was drinking with some of his comrades in a small town to the left of the camp, when a captain, with a guard of horse, came to take them up, being appointed to seize all he could find out of the lines, and hang up the first man, without delay. The guard entered the town and shut the gates. He saw them in time, ran to a wicket in the great gate, which was only upon the latch, and before the gate itself could be opened to let the horsemen follow him, got into the vineyards, and there concealed himself by lying down. He had a still narrower escape not long afterwards:—many complaints had been made of the marauders in the English army; and it was proclaimed that the guard would be out every night, to hang up the first offenders who were taken. This fellow listened to the proclamation, and set out, as soon as the officer who read it had turned away, upon a plundering party, with two of his companions. They stole four bullocks, and were met by an officer driving them to the camp. Staniforth said they

had bought them, and the excuse passed. On the next day the owners came to the camp to make their complaint; and three of the beasts, which had been sold, but not slaughtered, were identified. Orders were of course given to arrest the thieves. That very morning Staniforth had been sent to some distance on an out-party, and thus Providence again preserved him from a shameful death.

There was in the same company with him a native of Barnard-Castle, by name Mark Bond, a man of a melancholy but religious disposition, who had enlisted in the hope of being killed. "His ways," says Staniforth, "were not like those of other men: out of his little pay he saved money to send to his friends. We could never get him to drink with us; but he was always full of sorrow: he read much, and was much in private prayer." The state of his mind arose from having uttered blasphemy when he was a little boy, and the thought of this kept him in a constant state of wretchedness and despair. A Romanist might here observe, that a distressing case like this could not have occurred in one of his persuasion; and one who knows that the practice of confession brings with it evils tenfold greater than those which it palliates, may be allowed to regret that, in our church, there should be so little intercourse between the pastor and the people. This poor man might have continued his whole life in misery, if John Haime had not taken to preaching in the army: he went to hear him, and found what he wanted; his peace of mind was restored; and wishing that others should partake

in the happiness which he experienced, he could think of no one who stood more in need of the same spiritual medicine than his comrade Staniforth. He, as might be expected, first wondered at his conversation, and afterwards mocked at it. Bond however, was not thus to be discouraged: he met him one day when he was in distress, having neither food, money, nor credit, and asked him to go and hear the preaching. Staniforth made answer, "You had better give me something to eat and drink, for I am both hungry and dry." Bond, did as he was requested; took him to a sutler's, and treated him, and persuaded him afterwards, reluctant as he was, to accompany him to the preaching. Incoherent and rhapsodical as such preaching would be, it was better suited to such auditors than any thing more temperate would have been: it was level to their capacities; and the passionate sincerity with which it was delivered found the readiest way to their feelings. Staniforth, who went with great unwillingness, and who was apparently in no ways prepared for such an effect, was, by that one sermon, suddenly and effectually reclaimed from a state of habitual brutality and vice. He returned to his tent full of sorrow, thoroughly convinced of his miserable state, and "seeing all his sins stand in battle-array against him." The next day he went early to the place of meeting: some soldiers were reading there, some singing hymns, and others were at prayer. One came up to him, and after enquiring how long he had attended the preachers, said to him, "Let us go to

prayer;" and Staniforth was obliged to confess that he could not pray, for he had never prayed in his life, neither had he ever read in any devotional book. Bond had a piece of an old Bible, and gave it him, saying, "I can do better without it than you." This was a true friend. He found that Staniforth was in debt; and telling him that it became Christians to be first just, and then charitable, said, "We will put both our pays together, and live as hard as we can, and what we spare will pay the debt." Such practice must have come strongly in aid of the preaching.

From that time Staniforth shook off all his evil courses: though till then an habitual swearer, he never afterwards swore an oath: though addicted to drinking, he never was intoxicated again: though a gambler from his youth up, he left off gaming; and having so often risked his neck for the sake of plunder, he would not now gather an apple or a bunch of grapes. Methodism had wrought in him a great and salutary work; but it taught him to expect another change not less palpable to himself: he was in bitter distress under the weight of his sins, and he was taught to look for a full and entire sense of deliverance from the burden. His own efforts were not wanting to bring on this spiritual crisis, and, after some months, he was successful. The account which he gives must be explained by supposing that strong passion made the impression, of what was either a sleeping or a waking dream, strong as reality; — a far more probable solution than would be afforded by ascribing

it to any wilful exaggeration or deliberate falsehood. "From twelve at night till two," he says, "it was my turn to stand centinel at a dangerous post. I had a fellow-centinel, but I desired him to go away, which he willingly did. As soon as I was alone, I knelt down, and determined not to rise, but to continue crying and wrestling with God, till he had mercy on me. How long I was in that agony I cannot tell; but, as I looked up to Heaven, I saw the clouds open exceeding bright, and I saw Jesus hanging on the cross. At the same moment these words were applied to my heart, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' All guilt was gone, and my soul was filled with unutterable peace: the fear of death and hell was vanished away. I was filled with wonder and astonishment. I closed my eyes, but the impression was still the same; and, for about ten weeks, while I was awake, let me be where I would, the same appearance was still before my eyes, and the same impression upon my heart, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'" It may be believed that Staniforth felt what he describes, and imagined what he appeared to see; but to publish such an account as Wesley did, without one qualifying remark, is obviously to encourage wild and dangerous enthusiasm.

Staniforth's mother had bought him off once when he enlisted, and sent him from time to time money, and such things as he wanted and she could provide for him. He now wrote her a long letter, asking pardon of her and his father for all his *disobedience*; telling them that God, for Christ's

sake, had forgiven him his sins, and desiring her not to send him any more supplies, which he knew must straiten her, and which he no longer wanted, for he had learned to be contented with his pay. This letter they could not very well understand; it was handed about till it got into the hands of a dissenting minister, and of one of the leading Methodists at Sheffield: the latter sent Staniforth a "comfortable letter" and a hymn book; the former a letter also, and a Bible, which was more precious to him than gold; as was a prayer-book also, which his mother sent him. He, as well as Haime, came safe out of the battle of Fontenoy, where Bond was twice preserved in an extraordinary manner, one musket-ball having struck some money in one of his pockets, and another having been repelled by a knife. Soon afterwards he was drafted into the artillery, and ordered back to England on account of the rebellion in 1745. He was now quartered at Deptford, and from thence was able twice-a-week, to attend upon Wesley's preaching at the Foundry, or at West-Street Chapel. At Deptford also there was a meeting, and there he found a woman who, being of the same society, was willing to take him for a husband if he were out of the army. On his part, the match appears to have been a good one as to worldly matters: she was persuaded to marry him before his discharge was obtained; and, on his wedding-day, he was ordered to embark immediately for Holland.

The army which he joined in Holland was under the command of Prince Charles of Lorrain; and

as they soon came within sight of the enemy, Staniforth had too much spirit to apply for his discharge, "lest he should seem afraid to fight, and so bring a disgrace upon the gospel." Near Maestricht, two English regiments, of which his was one, with some Hanoverians and Dutch, in all about 12,000 men, being advanced in front of the army, had a sharp action. The Prince, according to this account, forgot to send them orders to retreat, "being busy with his cups and his ladies;" and it appears, indeed, as he says, that many brave lives were vilely thrown away that day by his gross misconduct. Among them was poor Bond: a ball went through his leg, and he fell at Staniforth's feet. "I and another," says he, "took him in our arms, and carried him out of the ranks, while he was exhorting me to stand fast in the Lord. We laid him down, took our leave of him, and fell into our ranks again." In their farther retreat, Staniforth again met with him, when he had received another ball through his thigh, and the French pressed upon them at that time so closely, that he was compelled to leave him thus mortally wounded, "but with his heart full of love, and his eyes full of Heaven." — "There," says he, "fell a great Christian, a good soldier, and a faithful friend."

When the army went into winter-quarters, Staniforth obtained his discharge for fifteen guineas, which his wife remitted him. He now settled at Deptford, became a leading man among the Methodists there, and finally a preacher in his own neighbourhood, and in and about London. And

however little it was to be expected from the early part of his life, and the school in which he was trained, his life was honourable to himself and beneficial to others. "I made it a rule," he says, "from the beginning, to bear my own expences: this cost me ten or twelve pounds a year; and I bless God I can bear it. Beside visiting the class and band, and visiting the sick, I preach five or six times in the week. And the Lord gives me to rejoice in that I can still say, these hands have ministered to my necessities." His preaching was so well liked, that he was more than once invited to leave the Connection, and take care of a separate congregation, with a salary of forty or fifty pounds a-year: but he was attached to Methodism; he saw that it was much injured by such separations; he was not weary of his labour; and as to pecuniary considerations, they had no weight with him. The course of his life, and the happy state of his mind, are thus described by himself: "I pray with my wife before I go out in the morning, and at breakfast-time with my family and all who are in the house. The former part of the day I spend in my business; my spare hours in reading and private exercise. Most evenings I preach, so that I am seldom at home before nine o'clock; but, though I am so much out at nights, and generally alone, God keeps me both from evil men and evil spirits: and many times I am as fresh when I come in at night, as I was when I went out in the morning. I conclude the day in reading the Scriptures, and in praying with my family. I am now in the

sixty-third year of my age, and glory be to God, I am not weary of well-doing. I find my desires after God stronger than ever; my understanding is more clear in the things of God; and my heart is united more than ever both to God and his people. I know their religion and mine is the gift of God through Christ, and the work of God by his Spirit: it is revealed in Scripture, and is received and retained by faith, in the use of all gospel ordinances. It consists in an entire deadness to the world and to our own will; and an entire devotedness of our souls, bodies, time, and substance to God, through Christ Jesus. In other words, it is the loving the Lord our God with all our hearts, and all mankind for God's sake. This arises from a knowledge of his love to us: *We love him, because we know he first loved us;* a sense of which is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is given to us. From the little hereof that I have experienced, I know, he that experiences this religion is a happy man."

No man found his way into the Methodist connection in a quieter manner, nor brought with him a finer and more reasonable mind, than GEORGE STORY, a native of Harthill, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The circumstances of his boyhood were favourable to his disposition: his parents taught him early the fear of the Lord; and though their instructions, he says, were tedious and irksome, yet the impression which they made was never lost, and often recurred when he was alone, or in places of temptation. The minister of the

parish also was a pious and venerable man: the solemnity with which he performed his duty impressed the boy with an awful sense of the Divine presence; and, when he listened to the burial-service, he had a distant prospect of judgement and eternity. Thunder and lightning filled him with a solemn delight, as a manifestation of the majesty and power of the Almighty. His heart, as well as his imagination, was open to all wholesome influences; and having one day killed a young bird by throwing a stone at it, grief and remorse for the pain which he had inflicted, kept him waking during several nights; and tears and prayers to God for pardon were the only means wherein he could find relief. After a decent school education, he was placed with a country bookseller. Here, being surrounded with books, he read with insatiable and indiscriminate avidity: histories, novels, plays, and romances, were perused by dozens. He studied short-hand, and improved the knowledge which he had learned at school of geometry and trigonometry; picked up something of geography, astronomy, botany, anatomy, and other branches of physical science; and tired himself with the Statutes at Large. The lives of the heathen philosophers delighted him so much, that at one time he resolved to take them for his models; and Thomas Taylor or John Fransham would then have found him in a fit state to have received the mysteries of Paganism. He frequently read till eleven at night, and began again at four or five in the morning; and he always had a book before him while he was at his meals.

From the shop he entered the printing-office, and, applying himself sedulously to the business, learned to dispatch it with much regularity, so that he had plenty of time both for study and recreation. One summer he was an angler, the next he was a florist, and cultivated auriculas and polyanthuses. These pursuits soon became insipid. He tried cards, and found them only implements for unprofitably consuming time; and, when led into drinking, in the midst of that folly he saw its madness, and turned from it with abhorrence. He hoped that horse-racing might be found a more manly and rational amusement; so he attended the races at Doncaster, with the most flattering expectations of the happiness he should find that week. "The first day," says he, "vanished away without any satisfaction: the second was still worse. As I passed through the company dejected and disappointed, it occurred to my mind, What is all this immense multitude assembled here for? to see a few horses gallop two or three times round the course, as if the devil were both in them and their riders! Certainly, we are all mad, we are fit for Bedlam, if we imagine that the Almighty made us for no other purpose but to seek happiness in such senseless amusements. I was ashamed and confounded, and determined never to be seen there any more."

At this time he had risen to the management of the printing-office: he had to publish a weekly newspaper, select the paragraphs from other papers, prepare the advertisements, correct the press, and

superintend the journeymen and apprentices; an employment, he says, which flattered his vanity, increased his native pride, and consequently led him farther from God. For now, in the course of his desultory reading, he fell in with some of those pernicious writers who have employed themselves in sapping the foundations of human happiness. "I read and reasoned," says he, "till the Bible grew not only dull, but, I thought, full of contradictions. I staggered first at the divinity of Christ, and at length gave up the Bible altogether, and sunk into Fatalism and Deism." In this state of mind, and at the age of twenty, he went to London, in full hope of there finding the happiness of which he was in search. But new things soon became old: they palled upon him; and, instead of happiness, an unaccountable anguish of spirit followed whenever his mind sunk back upon itself. He would gladly have gone abroad, for the sake of continual change, but it was a time of war. He resolved to try if religion would afford him relief, and went to several places of worship; "but even this," says he, "was in vain; there was something dull and disagreeable wherever I turned my eyes, and I knew not that the malady was in myself. At length I found Mr. Whitefield's chapel, in Tottenham-Court-Road, and was agreeably entertained with his manner of preaching: his discourses were so engaging, that, when I retired to my lodgings, I wrote down the substance of them in my journal, and frequently read them over with pleasure; but still nothing reached my case, nor had I any light

into the state of my soul. Meantime, on the week nights, I went to the theatres, nor could I discern any difference between Mr. Whitefield's preaching, and seeing a good tragedy."

Weary of every thing, and all places being alike to him, he yielded to the persuasion of his friends, returned into the country, and thinking himself too young and inexperienced to enter into business for himself, as they would fain have had him do, undertook, once more, the management of a printing-office. He wanted for nothing, he had more money than he knew what to do with, yet, in his own words, he was as wretched as he could live, without knowing either the cause of this misery, or any way to escape from it. For some years he had attempted to regulate his conduct according to reason; but even at that bar he stood condemned. His temper was passionate; he struggled against this, having thus far profited by the lessons of the Stoics; and greatly was he pleased when he obtained a victory over his own anger; but, upon sudden temptation, all his resolutions were "as a thread of flax before the fire." He mixed with jovial company, and endeavoured to catch their spirit; but, in the midst of levity, there was a weight and hollowness within him: experience taught him that this laughter was madness; and when he returned to sober thoughts, he found into how deep a melancholy a simulated mirth subsides. He wandered to different places of worship, and found matter of disquiet at all; at length he forfook them all, and shut himself up on Sundays, or went into the solitude of a neigh-

bouring wood. "Here," says he, "I considered, with the closest attention I was able, the arguments for and against Deism. I would gladly have given credit to the Christian revelation, but could not. My reason leaned on the wrong side, and involved me in endless perplexities. I likewise endeavoured to fortify myself with stronger arguments and firmer resolutions against my evil tempers; for, since I could not be a Christian, I wished, however, to be a good moral Heathen. Internal anguish frequently compelled me to supplicate the Divine Being for mercy and truth. I seldom gave over till my heart was melted, and I felt something of God's presence; but I retained those gracious impressions only for a short time."

It so happened that he was employed to abridge and print the life of Eugene Aram, a remarkable man, who was executed for a case of murder, in a strange manner brought to light long after the commission of the crime. The account of this person's extraordinary attainments kindled Story with emulation, and he had determined to take as much pains himself in the acquirement of knowledge, when some thoughts fastened upon his mind, and broke in pieces all his schemes. "The wisdom of this world," said he to himself, "is foolishness with God. What did this man's wisdom profit him? It did not save him from being a thief and a murderer; —no, nor from attempting his own life. True wisdom is foolishness with men. He that will be wise, must first become a fool that he may be wise. I was like a man awakened out of sleep," he con-

tinues: "I was astonished; I felt myself wrong; I was conscious I had been pursuing a vain shadow, and that God only could direct me into the right path. I, therefore, applied to him with earnest importunity, entreating him to show me the true way to happiness, which I was determined to follow, however difficult or dangerous." Just at this time Methodism began to flourish in his native village: his mother joined the Society, and sent him a message, entreating him to converse with persons of this description. To gratify her, being an obedient son, he called accordingly at a Methodist's house, and the persons who were assembled there went to prayer with him, and for him, a considerable time. The result was, as might be expected, —he looked upon them as well-meaning ignorant people, and thought no more about the matter. After a few days they desired he would come again; and he, considering that it was his mother's request, went without hesitation, though perhaps not very desirous of being prayed for a second time. On this occasion, however, argument was tried; and he disputed with them for some hours, till they were fairly wearied, without having produced the slightest impression upon him. To attack him on the side of his reason, was not indeed the way by which such reasoners were likely to prevail; such a proceeding would serve only to stimulate his vanity and provoke his pride; and, accordingly, he was about to withdraw, not a little elevated with the triumph which he had obtained, when a woman of the company desired to ask him

a few questions. The first was, "Are you happy?" His countenance instantly fell, and he honestly answered, "No."—"Are you not desirous of finding happiness?" she pursued. He replied, that he was desirous of obtaining it on any terms, and had long sought for it in every way, but in vain. She then told him, that if he sought the Lord with all his heart, he would certainly find in him that peace and pleasure which the world could not bestow. The right string had now been touched: every word sunk deep into his mind; and he says, that from that moment he never lost his resolution of being truly devoted to God.

The books which had misled him he cast into the fire; and willing as he now was to be led astray in a different direction by his new associates, his happy disposition preserved him. Not having the horrible fears, and terrors, and agonies which others declared they had experienced in the new-birth, and of which exhibitions were frequently occurring, he endeavoured to bring himself into the same state, but never could succeed in inducing these throes of spiritual labour. Yet thinking it a necessary part of the process of regeneration, and not feeling that consciousness of sanctification which his fellows professed, doubts came upon him thick and thronging. Sometimes he fell back towards his old scepticism: sometimes inclined to the miserable notion of predestination; plunging, as he himself expresses it, into the blackness of darkness. He found at length the folly of reasoning himself into despair, and the unreasonableness of

expecting a miraculous manifestation in his own bodily feelings; and he learned, in the true path of Christian humility, to turn from all presumptuous reasonings, and staying his mind upon God, to repose and trust in him with a child-like entireness of belief and love. This was at first mortifying to his proud reason and vain imagination; but it brought with it at length "an ever-permanent peace, which kept his heart in the knowledge and love of God;" not the overflowing joys which he expected, and had been taught to expect, by enthusiastic men; but that peace which God himself hath assured to all who seek him in humility and truth, and which passeth all understanding. There is not, in the whole hagiography of Methodism a more interesting or more remarkable case than this: —living among the most enthusiastic Methodists, enrolled among them, and acting and preaching with them for more than fifty years, George Story never became an enthusiast: his nature seems not to have been susceptible of the contagion.

CHAPTER XIX.

PROVISION FOR THE LAY-PREACHERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. — KINGSWOOD SCHOOL. — THE CONFERENCE.

At first there was no provision made for the lay-preachers. The enthusiasts who offered themselves to the work literally took no thought for the morrow what they should eat, nor what they should drink, nor yet for the body what they should put on. They trusted in Him who feedeth the fowls of the air, and who sent his ravens to Elijah in the wilderness. "He who had a staff," says one of these first itinerants, "might take one; he who had none might go without." They were lodged and fed by some of the Society wherever they went; and when they wanted clothes, if they were not supplied by individual friends, they represented their necessity to the stewards. St. Francis and his followers did not commit themselves with more confidence to the care of Providence, nor with a more entire disregard of all human means. But the Friars Minorite were marked by their habit for privileged, as well as peculiar persons; and as they professed poverty, the poorer and the more miserable their appearance, the greater was the respect which they obtained from the people. In England rags were no recommend-

ation; and it was found a great inconvenience that the popular itinerants should be clothed in the best apparel, while the usefulness of their fellows, who were equally devoted to the cause, was lessened by the shabbiness of their appearance. To remedy this evil it was at length agreed, that every circuit should allow its preacher three pounds per quarter to provide himself with clothing and books. Not long after this arrangement had been made, Mr. Wesley proposed that Mather should go with him into Ireland on one of his preaching expeditions, and promised that his wife should be supported during his absence. Mather cheerfully consented; but when he came to talk with his friends upon the subject, they cautioned him to beware how he relied for his wife's support upon a mere promise of this kind: for, when Mr. Wesley was gone, the matter would rest with the stewards. Upon this Mather thought it necessary to talk with the stewards himself: they asked him how much would be sufficient for his wife; and when he said four shillings a week, they thought it more than could be afforded, and Mather, therefore, refused to undertake the journey. However, in the course of the ensuing year, the necessity of making some provision for the wives of the itinerants was clearly perceived, and the reasonableness of Mather's demand was acknowledged. He was called upon to travel accordingly, and from that time the stated allowance was continued for very many years at the sum which he had fixed. A farther allowance was made of twenty shillings [a]

quarter for every child; and when a preacher was at home, the wife was entitled to eighteen-pence a day for his board; the computation being four-pence for breakfast, sixpence for dinner, and four-pence each for tea and supper; with the condition, that whenever he was invited out, a deduction was to be made for the meal.

But farther relief was still necessary for those married preachers who gave themselves up wholly to the service of Methodism. Their boys, when they grew too big to be under the mother's direction, were in a worse state than other children, and were exposed to a thousand temptations, having no father to control and instruct them, "Was it fit," said Wesley, "that the children of those who leave wife, home, and all that is dear, to save souls from death, should want what is needful either for soul or body? Ought not the Society to supply what the parent could not, because of his labours in the Gospel? The preacher, eased of this weight, would go on the more cheerfully, and perhaps many of these children might, in time, fill up the place of those who should have rested from their labours." The obvious remedy was to found a school for the sons of the preachers; and thinking that the wealthier members of the Society would rejoice if an opportunity were given them to separate their children from the contagion of the world, he seems to have hoped that the expences of the eleemosynary part of the institution might in great measure be defrayed by their means.

Some tracts upon education had led him to consider the defects of English schools; the mode of teaching, defective as that is, he did not regard; it was the moral discipline which fixed his attention; and in founding a seminary for his own people, whose steady increase he now contemplated as no longer doubtful, he resolved to provide, as far as possible, against all the evils of the existing institutions. The first point was to find a situation not too far from a great town, which would be very inconvenient for so large a household as he was about to establish, nor yet too near, and much less in it. For in towns the boys, whenever they went abroad, would have too many things to engage their thoughts, which ought, he said, to be diverted as little as possible from the objects of their learning; and they would have too many other children round about them, some of whom they were liable to meet every day, whose example would neither forward them in learning nor in religion. He chose a spot, three miles from Bristol, in the middle of Kingswood, on the side of a small hill, sloping to the west, sheltered from the east and north, and affording room for large gardens. At that time it was quite private and remote from all highways: now the turnpike road passes close beside it, and it is surrounded by a filthy population. He built the house of a size to contain fifty children, besides masters and servants, reserving one room and a little study for his own use.

In looking for masters he had the advantage of

being acquainted with every part of the nation: and yet he found it no easy thing to procure such as he desired,—men of competent acquirements, "who were truly devoted to God, who sought nothing on earth, neither pleasure, nor ease, nor profit, nor the praise of men." The first rule respecting scholars was, that no child should be admitted after he was twelve years old; before that age, it was thought he could not well be rooted either in bad habits or ill principles: he resolved also not to receive any that came to hand, but, if possible, "only such as had some thoughts of God, and some desire of saving their souls; and such whose parents desired they should not be almost, but altogether Christians." The proposed object was, "to answer the design of Christian education, by framing their minds, through the help of God, to wisdom and holiness, by instilling the principles of true religion, speculative and practical, and training them up in the ancient way, that they might be rational, scriptural Christians." Accordingly he proclaimed, that the children of *tender parents* had no business there, and that no child should be received, unless his parents would agree that he should observe all the rules of the house, and that they would not take him from school, no, not for a day, till they took him for good and all. "The reasonableness of this uncommon rule," says Wesley, "is shown by constant experience: for children may unlearn as much in one week, as they have learned in several; nay, and contract a prejudice to exact discipline

which never can be removed." Had Wesley been a father, he would have perceived that such a rule is unreasonable, and felt that it is abominable:— uncommon, unhappily, it is not, for it makes a part of the Jesuit establishments, and was adopted also by Buonaparte as part of his plan for training up an army of Mamelukes in Europe:—no rule could better forward the purpose of those who desire to enslave mankind.

The children were to rise at four, winter and summer: this, Wesley said, he knew by constant observation, and by long experience, to be of admirable use either for preserving a good, or improving a bad constitution; and he affirmed, that it was of peculiar service in almost all nervous complaints, both in preventing and in removing them. They were to spend the time till five in private, partly in reading, partly in singing, partly in prayer, and in self-examination and meditation, those that were capable of it. Poor boys! they had better have spent it in sleep. From five till seven they breakfasted and walked, or worked, the master being with them; for the master was constantly to be present; and there were no holidays, and no play on any day. Wesley had learnt a sour German proverb, saying, "he that plays when he is a child, will play when he is a man;" and he had forgotten an English one, proceeding from good nature and good sense, which tells us by what kind of discipline Jack may be made a dull boy: "Why," he asks, "should he learn now what he must unlearn by and by?" Why?—for the same

reason that he is fed with milk when a suckling, because it is the food convenient for him. They were to work in fair weather, according to their strength, in the garden: on rainy days in the house, always in presence of a master; for they were never, day or night, to be alone. This part of his system Wesley adopted from the great school at Jena, in Saxony: it is the practice of Catholic schools, and may, perhaps, upon a comparison of evils, be better than the opposite extreme, which leaves the boys, during the greater part of their time, wholly without superintendence. At a great expence of instinct and enjoyment, and of that freedom of character, without which the best character can only obtain from us a cold esteem, it gets rid of much vice, much cruelty, and much unhappiness. The school-hours were from seven to eleven, and from one to five: eight was the hour for going to bed; they slept in one dormitory, each in a separate bed; a master lay in the same room, and a lamp was kept burning there. Their food was as simple as possible, and two days in the week no meat was allowed.

The things to be taught there make a formidable catalogue in the founder's plan; reading, writing, arithmetic; English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew; history, geography, chronology, rhetoric, logic, ethics; geometry, algebra; natural philosophy, and metaphysics. No Roman author was to be read who had lived later than the Augustan age, except certain selections from Juvenal, Persius, and Martial. This was carrying classical pu-

ritanism to an extreme; and it indicates no very sound judgement that Wesley should have preferred a few of the modern Latin writers to supply the place of those whom he rejected. The classics which were retained were to be carefully expurgated: there had been a time when he was for interdicting them altogether, as improper to be used in the education of Christian youth, but this folly he had long outgrown.

He was enabled to establish the school by the bounty of Lady Maxwell, one of his few converts in high life. She was of the family of the Brisbanes, in Ayrshire; was married to Sir Walter Maxwell at the age of 17; at 19 was left a widow; and, six weeks after the death of her husband, lost her son and only child. From that hour she was never known to mention either. Weaned from the world by these severe dispensations, she looked for comfort to Him who giveth and who taketh away; and what little of her diary has appeared, shows more of high enthusiastic devotion, unmingled and undebased, than is to be found in any other composition of the kind. She used to say, that, had it not been for the Methodists, she should never have had those enjoyments in religion to which she had attained; because it is seldom or never that we go farther than our instructors teach us. It was, however, many years before she formally joined them, and she never forsook the church of Scotland. She lived to be the oldest member of the Society. The school was founded long before she became a member; but Wesley had no sooner men-

tioned his design to her, than she presented him with bank notes to the amount of 500*l.* and told him to begin immediately. After some time she asked how the building was going on, and whether he stood in need of farther assistance; and hearing that a debt of 300*l.* had been incurred, though he desired that she would not consider herself under any obligation in the business, she immediately gave him the whole sum.

The school was opened in 1748: in two or three months there were twenty-eight scholars, notwithstanding the strictness of the discipline; and so little was economy in education understood in those days, that there was an establishment of six masters for them. "From the very beginning," says Wesley, "I met with all sorts of discouragements. Cavillers, and prophets of evil, were on every side. An hundred objections were made, both to the whole design, and every particular branch of it, especially by those from whom I had reason to expect better things. Notwithstanding which, through God's help, I went on; wrote an English, a Latin, a Greek, a Hebrew, and a French grammar; and printed *Prælectiones Pueriles*, with many other books, for the use of the school." In making his grammars, Wesley rejected much of the rubbish with which such books are encumbered: they might have been simplified still farther; but it was reserved for Dr. Bell, the friend of children, to establish the principle in education, that every lesson should be made perfectly intelligible to the child.

Upon visiting the school a year after its establishment, he found that several rules had been habitually neglected; and he judged it necessary to send away some of the children, and suffer none to remain who were not clearly satisfied with them, and determined to observe them all. By the second year the scholars had been reduced from twenty-eight to eighteen: it is marvellous indeed that any but the sons of the preachers should have remained; that any parents should have suffered their children to be bred up in a manner which would inevitably, in ninety-nine cases out of an hundred, either disgust them with religion, or make them hypocrites. "I wonder," says he, "how I am withheld from dropping the whole design, so many difficulties have continually attended it; yet if this counsel is of God it shall stand, and all hindrances shall turn into blessings." The house was in a state of complete anarchy. One of the masters was so rough and disobliging, that the children were little profited by him: a second, though honest and diligent, was rendered contemptible by his person and manner: the third had been useful, till the fourth set the boys against him; and the two others were weighed down by the rest, who neither observed the rules in the school nor out of it. To crown all, the housekeeper neglected her duty, being taken up with thoughts of another kind; and the four maids were divided into two parties. This pitiful case he published for the information of the Society, and cut down the establishment to two masters, a housekeeper, and a maid. Two of

the elder boys were dismissed as incorrigible, out of four or five who were "very uncommonly wicked," (a very uncommon proportion of wicked boys out of eighteen,) and five more soon went away. Still it went on badly: four years afterwards he speaks of endeavouring once more to bring it into order. "Surely," he says, "the importance of this design is apparent, even from the difficulties that attend it. I spent more money, and time, and care on this than almost any design I ever had; and still it exercises all the patience I have. But it is worth all the labour."

Provision had thus been made for the maintenance of the preachers' families, and the education of their sons. A Conference, to which Wesley, in the year 1744, invited his brother Charles, four other clergymen, who co-operated with him, and four of his lay preachers, was from that time held annually, and became the general assembly, in which the affairs of the Society were examined and determined. They began their first meeting by recording their desire, "that all things might be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that they might meet with a single eye, and as little children who had every thing to learn; that every point which was proposed might be examined to the foundation; that every person might speak freely whatever was in his heart; and that every question which might arise should be thoroughly debated and settled." There was no reason, they said, to be afraid of doing this, lest they should overturn their first principles: for if

they were false, the sooner they were overturned the better; if they were true, they would bear the strictest examination. They determined, in the intermediate hours of this Conference, to visit none but the sick, and to spend all the time that remained in retirement; giving themselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing upon this their labour. With regard to the judgement of the majority, they agreed that, in speculative things, each could only submit, so far as his judgement should be convinced; and that, in every practical point, each would submit, so far as he could, without wounding his conscience. Farther than this, they maintained, a Christian could not submit to any man or number of men upon earth; either to council, bishop, or convocation. And this was that grand principle of private judgement on which all the reformers proceeded. "Every man must judge for himself; because every man must give an account for himself to God." But this principle, if followed to its full extent, is as unsafe and as untenable as the opposite extreme of the Romanists. The design of this meeting was to consider what to teach, how to teach, and what to do; in other words, how to regulate their doctrines discipline, and practice. Here, therefore, it will be convenient to present a connected account of each.

CHAPTER XIX.

WESLEY'S DOCTRINES AND OPINIONS.

WESLEY never departed willingly or knowingly from the doctrines of the Church of England, in which he had been trained up, and with which he was conscientiously satisfied after full and free enquiry. Upon points which have not been revealed, but are within the scope of reason, he formed opinions for himself, which were generally clear, consistent with the Christian system, and creditable, for the most part, both to his feelings and his judgement. But he laid no stress upon them, and never proposed them for more than they were worth. In the following connected view of his scheme, care has been taken to preserve his own words, as far as possible, for the sake of fidelity.

The moral, or, as he sometimes calls it, the Adamic law, he traced beyond the foundation of the world, to that period, unknown indeed to men, but doubtless enrolled in the annals of eternity, when the morning stars first sang together, being newly called into existence. It pleased the Creator to make these His first-born sons intelligent beings, that they might know Him who created them. For this end he endued them with understanding to discern truth from falsehood, good

from evil; and, as a necessary result of this, with liberty, — a capacity of choosing the one and refusing the other. By this they were likewise enabled to offer Him a free and willing service; a service rewardable in itself, as well as most acceptable to their gracious Master. The law which He gave them was a complete model of all truth, so far as was intelligible to a finite being; and of all good, so far as angelic natures were capable of embracing it. And it was His design herein to make way for a continued increase of their happiness, seeing every instance of obedience to that law would both add to the perfection of their nature, and entitle them to a higher reward, which the righteous Judge would give in its season. In like manner when God, in His appointed time, had created a new order of intelligent beings, when He had raised man from the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and caused him to become a living soul, He gave to this free intelligent creature the same law as to his first-born children; not written, indeed, upon tables of stone, or any corruptible substance, but engraven on his heart by the finger of God, written in the inmost spirit both of men and angels, to the intent it might never be afar off, never hard to be understood, but always at hand, and always shining with clear light, even as the sun in the midst of heaven. Such was the original of the law of God. With regard to man, it was coeval with his nature; but with regard to the elder sons of God, it shone in its *full* splendour, "or ever the mountains were brought

forth, or the earth and the round world were made."

Man was made holy, as He that created him is holy: perfect as his Father in Heaven is perfect. As God is love, so man, dwelling in love, dwelt in God, and God in him. God made him to be an image of his own eternity. To man thus perfect, God gave a perfect law, to which He required full and perfect obedience. He required full obedience in every point. No allowance was made for any falling short: there was no need of any, man, being altogether equal to the task assigned him. Man disobeyed this law, and from that moment he died. God had told him, "in the day that thou eatest of that fruit thou shalt surely die." Accordingly on that day he did die: he died to God, the most dreadful of all deaths. He lost the life of God: he was separated from Him in union with whom his spiritual life consisted. His soul died. The body dies when it is separated from the soul; the soul when it is separated from God: but this separation Adam sustained in the day — the hour when he ate of the forbidden fruit. The threat cannot be understood of temporal death, without impeaching the veracity of God. It must therefore be understood of spiritual death, the loss of the life and image of God. His body likewise became corruptible and mortal; and being already dead in the spirit, dead to God, dead in sin, he hastened on to death everlasting, to the destruction both of body and soul, in the fire never to be quenched.

Why was this? Why are there sin and misery in the world? Because man was created in the image of God: because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding, but a spirit like his Creator; a being endued not only with sense and understanding, but also with a will. Because, to crown the rest, he was endued with liberty, a power of directing his own affections and actions, a capacity of determining for himself, or of choosing good or evil. Had not man been endued with this, all the rest would have been of no use. Had he not been a free, as well as an intelligent being, his understanding would have been as incapable of holiness, or any kind of virtue, as a tree or a block of marble. And having this power of choosing good or evil, he chose evil. But in Adam all died, and this was the natural consequence of his fall. He was more than the representative or federal head of the human race, — the seed and souls of all mankind were contained in him, and therefore partook of the corruption of his nature. From that time every man who is born into the world bears the image of the Devil, in pride and self-will, — the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. All his posterity were, by his act and deed, entitled to error, guilt, sorrow, fear, pain, disease, and death, and these they have inherited for their portion. The cause has been revealed to us, and the effects are seen over the whole world, and felt in the heart of every individual. But this

is no ways inconsistent with the justice and goodness of God, because all may recover through the Second Adam, whatever they lost through the first. Not one child of man finally loses thereby, unless by his own choice. A remedy has been provided which is adequate to the disease. Yea, more than this, mankind have gained by the fall a capacity, first, of being more holy and happy on earth; and, secondly, of being more happy in heaven than otherwise they could have been. For if man had not fallen, there must have been a blank in our faith and in our love. There could have been no such thing as faith in God "so loving the world, that he gave his only Son for us men and for our salvation;" no faith in the Son of God, as loving us and giving himself for us; no faith in the Spirit of God, as renewing the image of God in our hearts, or raising us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness. And the same blank must likewise have been in our love. We could not have loved the Father under the nearest and dearest relation, as delivering up his Son for us: we could not have loved the Son, as bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, and by that one oblation, of himself once offered making a full oblation, sacrifice, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world: we could not have loved the Holy Ghost, as revealing to us the Father and the Son, as opening the eyes of our understandings, bringing us out of darkness into his marvellous light, renewing the image of God in our soul, and seal-

ing us unto the day of redemption. So that what is now in the sight of God pure religion and undefiled, would then have had no being.

The fall of man is the very foundation of revealed religion. If this be taken away, the Christian system is subverted, nor will it deserve so honourable an appellation as that of a cunningly devised fable. It is a scriptural doctrine: many plain texts directly teach it. It is a rational doctrine, thoroughly consistent with sound reason, though there may be some circumstances relating to it which human reason cannot fathom. It is a practical doctrine, having the closest connection with the life, power, and practice of religion. It leads man to the foundation of all Christian practice, the knowledge of himself, and thereby to the knowledge of God, and of Christ crucified. It is an experimental doctrine. The sincere Christian carries the proof of it in his own bosom. Thus Wesley reasoned; and, from the corruption of man's nature, or in his own view of the doctrine, from the death of the soul, he inferred the necessity of a New Birth. He had made that expression obnoxious in the season of his enthusiasm, and it was one of those things which embarrassed him in his sober and maturer years: but he had committed himself too far to retract, and, therefore, when he saw, and in his own cool judgement disapproved, the extravagances to which the abuse of the term had led, he still continued to use it, and even pursued the metaphor through all its bearings, with a wantonness of ill-directed fancy, of which

this is the only instance in all his writings. And in attempting to reconcile the opinion which he held with the doctrine of the Church, he entangled himself in contradictions, like a man catching at all arguments when defending a cause which he knows to be weak and untenable.

Connected with his doctrine of the New Birth was that of Justification, which he affirmed to be inseparable from it, yet easily to be distinguished, as being not the same, but of a widely different nature. In order of time, neither of these is before the other; in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also born of the Spirit; but, in order of thinking, as it is termed, Justification precedes the New Birth. We first conceive his wrath to be turned away, and then his Spirit to work in our hearts. Justification implies only a relative, the New Birth a real change. God, in justifying us, does something *for* us; in begetting us again, He does the work *in* us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children. By the latter our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one restores us to the favour, the other to the image of God. Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins, and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The immediate effects are the peace of God; a peace that passeth all understanding, and a "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And at the

same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again; and when we are born again, then our sanctification begins, and thenceforward we are gradually to "grow up in him who is our head." This expression, says Wesley, points out the exact analogy there is between natural and spiritual things. A child is born of a woman in a moment, or, at least, in a very short time. Afterwards he gradually and slowly grows, till he attains to the stature of a man. In like manner a person is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment; but it is by slow degrees that he afterwards grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation, therefore, which there is between our natural birth and our growth, there is also between our New Birth and our Sanctification. And sanctification, though in some degree the immediate fruit of justification, is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally different nature. The one implies what God does *for us* through his *Son;* the other what he works *in us* by his *Spirit.* Men are no more able *of themselves* to think one good thought, to speak one good word, or do one good work, after justification, than before they were justified. When the Lord speaks to our hearts the second time, "*be clean,*" then only the evil root, the carnal mind is destroyed, and sin subsists no more. A deep conviction that there is yet in us a carnal mind, shows, beyond all possibility of doubt, the absolute necessity of a farther change. If there be no such se-

cond change, if there be no instantaneous deliverance after justification, if there be none but a gradual work of God, then we must be content, as well as we can, to remain full of sin till death; and if so, we must remain guilty till death, continually deserving punishment. Thus Wesley explains a doctrine which, in his old age, he admitted that he did not find a profitable subject for an unawakened congregation.

This deliverance, he acknowledged, might be gradually wrought in some. I mean, he says, in this sense, they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so he generally does. This, Wesley insisted was a plain fact, of which there was evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. And why might it not be instantaneous? he argued. A moment is to Him the same as a thousand years. He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is his will: and he cannot wait or stay for more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons he is pleased to honour. Whatever may be thought of the doctrine and of its evidence, it was a powerful one in Wesley's hands. To the confidence, he says, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us *now*, there needs to be added one thing more, a divine evidence and conviction that he doth it. In that hour it is done. "*Thou*, therefore, look for it every moment: you can be no worse if you are

no better for that expectation; for were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope; it will come, it will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment. Why not this hour? this moment? Certainly you may look for it now, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or works. If by works, you want something to be done *first, before* you are sanctified. You think I must first *be*, or *do* thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are;* then expect it *now.* It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connection between these three points — expect it *by faith,* expect it *as you are,* and expect it *now.* To deny one of them is to deny them all: to allow one, is to allow them all. Do *you* believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true then to your principle, and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse; as a poor sinner, that has nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but '*Christ died.*' And if you look for it as you are, then expect it *now.* Stay for nothing! Why should you! Christ is ready, and he is all you want. He is waiting for you! he is at the door. Whosoever thou art who desirest to be forgiven, first believe. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then thou shalt do all things well. Say not, I cannot be accepted yet, because I am not good enough. Who is good enough, who ever was, to merit acceptance

at God's hands? Say not, 'I am not contrite enough: I am not sensible enough of my sins.' I know it. I would to God thou wert more sensible of them, and more contrite a thousand fold than thou art! But do not stay for this. It may be God will make thee so; not before thou believest, but by believing. It may be thou wilt not weep much, till thou lovest much, because thou hast had much forgiven."

Upon these fundamental doctrines of the New Birth and Justification by Faith, he exhorted his disciples to insist with all boldness, at all times, and in all places: in public, those who were called thereto; and at all opportunities in private. But what is faith? "Not an opinion," said Wesley, "nor any number of opinions put together, be they ever so true. A string of opinions is no more Christian faith, than a string of beads is Christian holiness. It is not an assent to any opinion, or any number of opinions. A man may assent to three, or three-and-twenty creeds: he may assent to all the Old and New Testament, (at least as far as he understands them,) and yet have no Christian faith at all. The faith by which the promise is attained is represented by Christianity as a power wrought by the Almighty in an immortal spirit, inhabiting a house of clay, to see through that veil into the world of spirits, into things invisible and eternal: a power to discern those things which, with eyes of flesh and blood, no man hath seen, or can see; either by reason of their nature, which (though they surround us on every side) is not perceivable

by these gross senses; or by reason of their distance, as being yet afar off in the bosom of eternity. It showeth what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither could it before enter into our heart to conceive; and all this in the clearest light, with the fullest certainty and evidence. For it does not leave us to receive our notice by mere reflection from the dull glass of sense, but resolves a thousand enigmas of the highest concern, by giving faculties suited to things invisible. It is the eye of the new-born soul, whereby every true believer "seeth Him who is invisible." It is the ear of the soul, whereby the sinner "hears the voice of the Son of God and lives;" the palate of the soul, (if the expression may be allowed,) whereby a believer "tastes the good word and the powers of the world to come;" the feeling of the soul, whereby, "through the power of the Highest overshadowing him," he perceives the presence of Him in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being, and feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart. It is the internal evidence of Christianity, a perpetual revelation, equally strong, equally new, through all the centuries which have elapsed since the incarnation, and passing now, even as it has done from the beginning, directly from God into the believing soul. Do you suppose time will ever dry up this stream? Oh no! It shall never be cut off—

Labitur et labetur in omne volubilis ævum.

It flows, and as it flows, for ever will flow on.

The historical evidence of Revelation, strong and clear as it is, is cognizable by men of learning alone; but this is plain, simple, and level to the lowest capacity. The sum is, "One thing I know: I was blind, but now I see:" an argument of which a peasant, a woman, a child, may feel all the force. The traditional evidence gives an account of what was transacted far away and long ago. The inward evidence is intimately present to all persons, at all times, and in all places. "It is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, if thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ." *This, is the record,* this is the evidence, emphatically so called, *that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

Why, then, have not all men this faith? Because no man is able to work it in himself: it is a work of omnipotence. It requires no less power thus to quicken a dead soul, than to raise a body that lies in the grave. It is a new creation; and none can create a soul anew, but he who at first created the heavens and the earth. May not your own experience teach you this? said Wesley. Can you give yourself this faith? Is it in your power to see, or hear, or taste, or feel God? to raise in yourself any perception of God, or of an invisible world? to open an intercourse between yourself and the world of spirits? to discern either them or Him that created them? to burst the veil that is on your heart, and let in the light of eternity? You know it is not. You not only do not, but cannot (by your own strength) thus believe. The

more you labour so to do, the more you will be convinced it is the gift of God. It is the *free gift* of God, which he bestows not on those who are *worthy* of his favour, not on such as are *previously holy*, and so *fit* to be crowned with all the blessings of his goodness; but on the ungodly and unholy; on those who, till that hour, were *fit* only for everlasting destruction; those in whom was no good thing, and whose only plea was, God be merciful to me a sinner! No merit, no goodness in man precedes the forgiving love of God. His pardoning mercy supposes nothing in us but a sense of mere sin and misery; and to all who see and feel, and own their wants, and their utter inability to remove them, God freely gives faith, for the sake of him "in whom he is always well pleased." Whosoever thou art, O man, who hast the sentence of death in thyself, unto thee saith the Lord, not, "Do this, perfectly obey all my commands, and live;" but "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Without faith, a man cannot be justified, even though he should have every thing else; with faith, he cannot but be justified, though every thing else should be wanting. This justifying faith implies not only the personal revelation, the inward evidence of Christianity, but likewise a sure and firm confidence in the individual believer that Christ died for *his* sins, loved *him*, and gave his life for *him*. And at what time soever a sinner thus believes, God justifieth him. Repentance, indeed, must have been given him before; but that repent-

ance was neither more nor less than a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil; and whatever good he hath or doth from that hour when he first believes in God through Christ, faith does not *find*, but *bring*. Both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are in some degree necessary to justification; but they are not necessary in the same *sense* with faith, nor in the same *degree*. Not in the same *degree*, for these fruits are only necessary conditionally, if there be time and opportunity for them. Not in the same *sense*; for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary — necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is immediately and directly necessary to justification. In like manner, faith is the only condition of sanctification. Every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has, or has not. In other words, no man can be sanctified till he believes; every man when he believes is sanctified.

Here Wesley came upon perilous ground. — We must be holy in heart and life, before we can be conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy at all. We cannot love Him till we know that He loves us; and this we cannot know till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. The testimony of the Spirit of God must therefore, he argued, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit. But he perceived that many had mistaken the voice of their own imagination for this witness of the Spirit, and presumed that they were children of

God, while they were doing the works of the Devil. And he was not surprised that many sensible men, seeing the effects of this delusion, should lean toward another extreme, and question whether the witness of the Spirit, whereof the apostle speaks, is the privilege of ordinary Christians, and not rather one of those extraordinary gifts, which they suppose belonged only to the apostle's age. Yet, when he asks, "How may one, who has the real witness in himself, distinguish it from presumption?" he evades the difficulty, and offers a declamatory reply, "How, I pray, do you distinguish day from night? How do you distinguish light from darkness? or the light of a star, or of a glimmering taper, from the light of the noon-day sun?" This is the ready answer of every one who has been crazed by enthusiasm. But Wesley regarded the doctrine as one of the glories of his people, as one grand part of the testimony which God, he said, had given them to bear to all mankind. It was by this peculiar blessing upon them, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth, he averred, had been recovered, which had been for many years well nigh lost and forgotten.

These notions led to the doctrine of Assurance, which he had defended so pertinaciously against his brother Samuel. But upon this point his fervour had abated, and he made a fairer retractation than was to be expected from the founder of a sect. "Some," said he, "are fond of the expression; I am not: I hardly ever use it. But I

will simply declare (having neither leisure nor inclination to draw the sword of controversy concerning it) what are my present sentiments with regard to the *thing* which is usually meant thereby. I believe a few, but very few Christians, have an assurance from God of everlasting salvation; and that is the thing, which the apostle terms the plerophory, or full assurance of hope. I believe more have such an assurance of being *now* in the favour of God, as excludes all doubt and fear: and this, if I do not mistake, is what the apostle means by the plerophory, or full assurance of faith. I believe a consciousness of being in the favour of God (which I do not term plerophory, or full assurance, since it is frequently weakened, nay, perhaps interrupted by returns of doubt or fear) is the common privilege of Christians, fearing God, and working righteousness. Yet I do not affirm there are no exceptions to this general rule. Possibly some may be in the favour of God, and yet go mourning all the day long. (But I believe this is usually owing either to disorder of body, or ignorance of the gospel promises.) Therefore I have not, for many years, thought a consciousness of acceptance to be essential to justifying faith. And after I have thus explained myself once for all, I think, without any evasion or ambiguity, I am sure without any self-contradiction, I hope all reasonable men will be satisfied: and whoever will still dispute with me on this head, must do it for disputing's sake."

The doctrine of Perfection is not less perilous,

sure as the expression was to be mistaken by the ignorant people to whom his discourses were addressed. This, too, was a doctrine which he had preached with inconsiderate ardour at the commencement of his career; and which, as he grew older, cooler, and wiser, he modified and softened down, so as almost to explain it away. He defined it to be a constant communion with God, which fills the heart with humble love; and to this he insisted, that every believer might attain. Yet, he admitted, that it did not include a power never to think an useless thought, nor speak an useless word. Such a perfection is inconsistent with a corruptible body, which makes it impossible always to think right: if, therefore, Christian perfection implies this, he admitted that we must not expect it till after death:—to one of his female disciples, who seems to have written to him under a desponding sense of her own imperfection, he replied in these terms:—"I want you," he added, "to be *all love*. This is the perfection I believe and teach; and this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders, which that high-strained perfection is not. Indeed my judgment is, that (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo; and that to set perfection too high, is the most effectual way of driving it out of the world." In like manner he justified the word to Bishop Gibson, by explaining it to mean less than it expressed; so that the bishop replied to him, "Why, Mr. Wesley, if this is what you mean by perfection, who can be against it?"—"Man," he says,

"in his present state, can no more attain Adamic than angelic perfection. The perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body, is the complying with that kind command, 'My son, give me thy heart!' It is the loving the Lord his God, with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind." But these occasional explanations did not render the general use of the word less mischievous, or less reprehensible. Ignorant hearers took it for what it appeared to mean; and what, from the mouths of ignorant instructors, it was intended to mean. It flattered their vanity and their spiritual pride, and became one of the most popular tenets of the Methodists, precisely because it is one of the most objectionable. Wesley himself repeatedly finds fault with his preachers if they neglected to enforce a doctrine so well adapted to gratify their hearers. In one place he says, "The more I converse with the believers in Cornwall, the more am I convinced that they have sustained great loss for want of hearing the doctrine of Christian Perfection clearly and strongly enforced. I see wherever this is not done, the believers grow dead and cold. Nor can this be prevented, but by keeping up in them an hourly expectation of being perfected in love. I say an hourly expectation; for to expect it at death, or some time hence, is much the same as not expecting it at all." And on another occasion he writes thus: — "Here I found the plain reason why the work of God had gained no ground in this circuit all the year. The preachers had given up the

Methodist testimony. Either they did not speak of perfection at all, (the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust,) or they spoke of it only in general terms, without urging the believers to go on to perfection, and to expect it every moment: and wherever this is not earnestly done, the work of God does not prosper. As to the word perfection," said he, "it is scriptural, therefore neither you nor I can, in conscience, object to it, unless we would send the Holy Ghost to school, and teach Him to speak who made the tongue." Thus it was that he attempted to justify to others, and to himself also, the use of language, for persevering in which, after the intemperance of his enthusiasm had abated, there can be no excuse, seeing that all he intended to convey by the obnoxious term might have been expressed without offending the judicious, or deluding the ignorant and indiscreet.

Wesley was not blind to the tendency of these doctrines. "The true gospel," said he, "touches the very edge both of Calvinism and Antinomianism, so that nothing but the mighty power of God can prevent our sliding either into the one or the other." Many of his associates and followers fell into both. He always declared himself clearly and strongly against both; though at the expence of some inconsistency, when he preached of a sanctification which left the subject liable to sin, of an assurance which was not assured, and of an imperfect perfection. But his real opinion could not be mistaken; and few men have combated

these pesstilent errors with more earnestness or more success. He never willingly engaged in those subtle and unprofitable discussions which have occasioned so much dissension in the Christian world; but upon those points in which speculation is allowable, and error harmless, he freely indulged his imagination.

It was his opinion that there is a chain of beings advancing by degrees from the lowest to the highest point, — from an atom of unorganized matter, to the highest of the archangels; an opinion consonant to the philosophy of the bards, and confirmed by science, as far as our physiological knowledge extends. He believed in the ministry both of good and evil angels; but whether every man had a guardian angel to protect him, as the Romanists hold, and a malignant demon continually watching to seduce him into the ways of sin and death, this he considered as undetermined by revelation, and therefore doubtful. Evil thoughts he held to be infused into the minds of men by the evil principle; and that "as no good is done, or spoken, or thought by any man, without the assistance of God working together *in* and *with* those that believe in him; so there is no evil done, or spoken, or thought, without the assistance of the Devil, who worketh with energy in the children of unbelief. And certainly," said he, "it is as easy for a spirit to speak to our heart, as for a man to speak to our ears. But sometimes it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish the thoughts which he infuses from our own thoughts, those which he

injects so exactly resembling those which naturally arise in our own minds. Sometimes, indeed, we may distinguish one from the other by this circumstance: the thoughts which naturally arise in our minds are generally, if not always, occasioned by, or, at least, connected with some inward or outward circumstance that went before; but those that are preternaturally suggested, have frequently no relation to, or connection (at least none that we are able to discern) with any thing which preceded. On the contrary, they shoot in, as it were, across, and thereby show that they are of a different growth."

His notions of diabolical agency went farther than this: he imputed to it many of the accidents and discomforts of life,—disease, bodily hurts, storms and earthquakes, and nightmare: he believed that epilepsy was often, or always the effect of posession, and that most madmen were demoniacs. A belief in witchcraft naturally followed from these premises; but, after satisfying his understanding that supernatural acts and appearances are consistent with the order of the universe, sanctioned by Scripture, and proved by testimony too general and too strong to be resisted, he invalidated his own authority, by listening to the most absurd tales with implicit credulity, and recording them as authenticated facts. He adhered to the old opinion, that the devils were the gods of the heathen; and he maintained, that the words *in* the Lord's Prayer, which have been rendered *evil*, mean, in the original, *the wicked one*, "empha-

tically so called, the prince and god of this world, who works with mighty power in the children of disobedience."

One of his most singular notions was concerning the day of judgement. He thought it probable that its duration would be several thousand years, that the place would be above the earth, and that the circumstances of every individual's life would then be brought forth in full view, together with all their tempers, and all the desires, thoughts, and intents of their hearts. This he thought absolutely necessary for the full display of the glory of God, for the clear and perfect manifestation of his wisdom, justice, power, and mercy. "Then only," he argued, "when God hath brought to light all the hidden things of darkness, will it be seen that wise and good were all his ways; that he saw through the thick cloud, and governed all things by the wise counsel of his own will; that nothing was left to chance or the caprice of men, but God disposed all strongly, and wrought all into one connected chain of justice, mercy, and truth." Whether the earth and the material heavens would be consumed by the general conflagration, and pass away, or be transmuted by the fire into that sea of glass like unto crystal, which is described in the Apocalypse as extending before the throne, we could neither affirm nor deny, he said; but we should know hereafter. He held the doctrine of the millennium to be scriptural; but he never fell into those wild and extravagant fancies, in which speculations of this kind

so frequently end. The Apocalypse is the favourite study of crazy religionists; but Wesley says of it, "Oh, how little do we know of this deep book! at least, how little do *I* know! I can barely conjecture, not affirm, any one point concerning that part of it which is yet unfulfilled."

He entertained some interesting opinions concerning the brute creation, and derived whatever evils inferior creatures endure, or inflict upon each other, from the consequence of the Fall. In Paradise they existed in a state of happiness, enjoying will and liberty: their passions and affections were regular, and their choice always guided by their understanding, which was perfect in its kind. "What," says he, "is the barrier between men and brutes, —the line which they cannot pass? It is not reason. Set aside that ambiguous term; exchange it for the plain word understanding, and who can deny that brutes have this? We may as well deny that they have sight or hearing. But it is this: man is capable of God; the inferior creatures are not. We have no ground to believe that they are in any degree capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God. This is the specific difference between man and brute —the great gulf which they cannot pass over. And as a loving obedience to God was the perfection of man, so a loving obedience to man was the perfection of brutes." While this continued, they were happy after their kind, in the right state and the right use of all their faculties. Evil and pain had not entered into paradise; and they were immortal; for "God made *not*

death, neither hath he pleasure in the death of any living." How true, then, is that word, "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good."

But as all the blessings of God flowed through man to the inferior creatures, those blessings were cut off when man made himself incapable of transmitting them, and all creatures were then subjected to sorrow, and pain, and evil of every kind. It is probable that the meaner creatures sustained much loss, even in the lower faculties of their corporeal powers: they suffered more in their understanding, and still more in their liberty, their passions, and their will. The very foundations of their nature were turned upside down. As man is deprived of his perfection, his loving obedience to God, so brutes are deprived of their perfection, their loving obedience to man. The far greater part flee from his hated presence; others set him at defiance, and destroy him when they can; a few only retain more or less of their original disposition, and, through the mercy of God, still love him and obey him. And in consequence of the first transgression, death came upon the whole creation; and not death alone, but all its train of preparatory evils, pain, and ten thousand sufferings; nor these only, but likewise those irregular passions, all those unlovely tempers, which in man are sins, and even in brutes are sources of misery, passed upon all the inhabitants of the earth, and remain in all, except the children of God. Inferior creatures torment, persecute, and devour each

other, and all are tormented and persecuted by man. But, says Wesley, will *the creature,* will even the brute creation always remain in this deplorable condition? God forbid that we should affirm this, yea, or even entertain such a thought. —While the whole creation groaneth together, whether men attend or not, their groans are not dispersed in idle air, but enter into the ears of him that made them. Away with vulgar prejudices, and let the plain word of God take place! "God shall wipe away all tears: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying. Neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." This blessing shall take place; not on men alone, (there is no such restriction in the text,) but on every creature according to its capacity. The whole brute creation will then undoubtedly be restored to all that they have lost, and with a large increase of faculties. They will be delivered from all unruly passions, from all evil, and all suffering. And what if it should then please the all-wise, the all-gracious Creator, to raise them higher in the scale of beings? What if it should please Him, when he makes us equal to angels, to make them what we are now, creatures capable of God, capable of knowing, and loving, and enjoying the author of their being?"

Some teacher of materialism had asserted, that if man had an immaterial soul, so had the brutes; as if this conclusion reduced that opinion to a manifest absurdity. "I will not quarrel," said Wesley, "with any that think they have. Nay, I

wish he could prove it; and surely I would rather allow them souls, than I would give up my own." He cherished this opinion, because it furnished a full answer to a plausible objection against the justice of God. That justice might seem to be impugned by the sufferings to which brute animals are subject; those, especially, who are under the tyranny of brutal men. But the objection vanishes, if we consider that something better remains after death for these poor creatures also. This good end, he argued, was answered by thus speculating upon a subject which we so imperfectly understand; and such speculations might soften and enlarge our hearts.

The kindness of Wesley's nature is apparent in this opinion, and that same kindness produced in him a degree of charity, which has seldom been found in those who aspire to reform a church or to establish a sect. "We may die," he says, "without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom; but if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels! I will not quarrel with you about any opinion; only see that your heart be right towards God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, that you love your neighbour, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions: I am weary to bear them: my soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion: give me an humble gentle lover of God and man; a man full of mercy and good faith, without partiality,

and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of. 'Whosoever' thus 'doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' This temper of mind led him to judge kindly of the * Romanists, and of † heretics of every description, wherever a Christian dis-

* "I read the deaths of some of the order of La Trappe. I am amazed at the allowance which God makes for invincible ignorance. Notwithstanding the mixture of superstition which appears in every one of these, yet what a strong vein of piety runs through all! What deep experience of the inward work of God, of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

"In riding from Evesham to Bristol, I read over that surprising book, the life of Ignatius Loyola: surely one of the greatest men that ever was engaged in the support of so bad a cause! I wonder any man should judge him to be an enthusiast: no; but he knew the people with whom he had to do; and setting out, like Count Zinzendorff, with a full persuasion that he might use guile to promote the glory of God, or (which he thought the same thing) the interest of his church, he acted in all things consistent with his principles."

† Of Pelagius he says, "by all I can pick up from ancient authors, I guess he was both a wise and a holy man; that we know nothing but his name, for his writings are all destroyed — not one line of them left." So, too, he says of some heretics of an earlier age; "by reflecting on an odd book which I had read in this journey, 'The General Delusion of Christians with regard to Prophecy,' I was fully convinced of what I had long suspected: 1st, that the Montanists, in the second and third centuries, were real scriptural Christians; and 2d, that the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that faith and holiness were well nigh lost, but that dry, formal, orthodox men began, even then, to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves, and to decry them all, as either madness or imposture." He vindicated Servetus also. "Being," he says," in the Bodleian library, I light on Mr. Calvin's account of the case of Michael Servetus, several of whose letters he occasionally inserts, wherein Servetus often declares in terms, 'I believe the Father is God, the Son is God,

position and a virtuous life were found. He published the lives of several Catholics, and of one * Socinian, for the edification of his followers. He believed not only that Heathens, who did their duty according to their knowledge, were capable of eternal life; but even that a communion with the spiritual world had sometimes been vouchsafed them. Thus, he affirmed, that the demon of Socrates was a ministering angel, and that Marcus

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and the Holy Ghost is God.' Mr. Calvin, however, paints him such a monster as never was: an Arian, a blasphemer, and what not; besides strewing over him his flowers of *dog*, *devil*, *swine*, and so on, which are the usual appellations he gives to his opponents. But still he utterly denies his being the cause of Servetus's death. "No," says he, "I only advised our magistrates, as having a right, to restrain heretics by the sword, to seize upon and try that arch-heretic; but, after he was condemned, I said not one word about his execution."

He reverts to this subject in his Remarks upon a Tract by Dr. Erskine. "That Michael Servetus was 'one of the wildest Anti-Trinitarians that ever appeared,' is by no means clear. I doubt of it, on the authority of Calvin himself, who certainly was not prejudiced in his favour. For, if Calvin does not misquote his words, he was no Anti-Trinitarian at all. Calvin himself gives a quotation from one of his letters, in which he expressly declares, 'I do believe the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; but I dare not use the word Trinity, or person.' I dare, and I think them very good words; but I should think it very hard to be burnt alive for not using them, especially with a slow fire, made of moist green wood. I believe Calvin was a great instrument of God; and that he was a wise and pious man; but I cannot but advise those who love his memory, to let Servetus alone."

* Thomas Firmin. Wesley prefaces the life of this good man in his magazine with these words: "I was exceedingly struck at reading the following life, having long settled it in my mind, that the entertaining wrong notions concerning the Trinity, was inconsistent with real piety. But I cannot argue against matter of fact. I dare not deny that Mr. Firman was a pious man, although his notions of the Trinity were quite erroneous."

Antoninus * received good inspirations, as he has asserted of himself. And where there was no such individual excellence, as in these signal instances, he refused to believe that any man could be precluded from salvation by the accident of his birth-place. Upon this point he vindicated divine justice, by considering the different relation in which the Almighty stands to his creatures, as a creator and as a governor. As a creator, he acts in all things according to his own sovereign will: in that exercise of his power, justice can have no place; for nothing is due to what has no being. "According, therefore, to his own good pleasure, he allots the time, the place, the circumstances for the birth of each individual, and gives them various degrees of understanding and of knowledge, diversified in numberless ways. "It is hard to say how far this extends: what an amazing difference there is between one born and bred up in a pious English family, and one born and bred among the Hottentots. Only we are sure the difference cannot be so great, as to necessitate one to be good, or the other to be evil; to force one into everlasting glory, or the other into everlasting burnings." For, as a governor, the Almighty cannot possibly

* "I read to-day part of the meditations of Marcus Antoninus. What a strange emperor! and what a strange heathen! giving thanks to God for all the goods things he enjoyed! in particular for his good inspirations, and for twice revealing to him in dreams things whereby he was cured of, otherwise incurable, distempers. I make no doubt but this is one of those *many who shall come from the East and the West, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the children of the kingdom*, nominal Christians, *are shut out*."

act according to his own mere sovereign will; but, as he has expressly told us, according to the invariable rules both of justice and mercy. Whatsoever, therefore, it hath pleased Him to do of his sovereign pleasure as Creator, He will judge the world in righteousness, and every man therein, according to the strictest justice. He will punish no man for doing any thing which he could not possibly avoid; neither for omitting any thing which he could not possibly do."

Wesley was sometimes led to profess a different doctrince, in consequence of discussing questions which serve rather to sharpen the disputatious faculties than to improve a Christian dispostion. Thus he has affirmed, in the Minutes of Conference, that a Heathen, a Papist, or a Church-of-England man, if they die without being sanctified, according to his notions of sanctification, cannot see the Lord. And to the question, Can an unbeliever, whatever he be in other respects, challenge any thing of God's justice? The answer is, "absolutely nothing but hell." But the humaner opinion was more congenial to his temper, and in that better opinion he rested.

CHAPTER XXI.

DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODISTS.

It is less surprising that Wesley should have obtained so many followers, than that he should have organised them so skilfully, and preserved his power over them without diminution, to the end of his long life. Francis of Assisi, and Ignatius Loyola, would have produced little effect, marvellous enthusiasts as they were, unless their enthusiasm had been assisted and directed by wiser heads. Wesley, who in so many other respects may be compared to these great agents in the Catholic world, stands far above them in this. He legislated for the sect which he raised, and exercised an absolute supremacy over his people. "The power I have," says he, "I never sought: it was the undesired, unexpected result of the work God was pleased to work by me. I have a thousand times sought to devolve it on others; but as yet I cannot; I therefore suffer it, till I can find any to ease me of my burden." That time never arrived. It was convenient for the society that he should be really as well as ostensibly their head; and, however he may have deceived himself, the love of power was a ruling passion in his mind.

The question was asked, at one of the Conferences, what the power was which he exercised over all the Methodists in Great Britain and Ireland. It was evidently proposed, that he might have an opportunity of defining and asserting it. He began his reply by premising, that Count Zinzendorff loved to keep all things closely, but that he loved to do all things openly, and would therefore tell them all he knew of the matter. A few persons, at the beginning, came to him in London, and desired him to advise and pray with them: others did the same in various parts of the kingdom, and they increased every where. "The desire," said he, "was on their part, not on mine: my desire was to live and die in retirement; but I did not see that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God. Here commenced my power; namely, a power to appoint when, where, and how they should meet; and to remove those whose life shewed that they had no desire to flee from the wrath to come. And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, twelve hundred, or twelve thousand." In a short time some of these persons said they would not *sit under him* for nothing, but would subscribe quarterly. He made answer, that he would have nothing, because he wanted nothing; for his fellowship supplied him with all, and more than all he wanted. But they represented that money was wanted to pay for the lease of the Foundry, and for putting it in repair. Upon that ground he suffered them to subscribe. "Then I asked," said he,

"who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful? One said, I will do it, and keep the account for you: so here was the first steward. Afterwards I desired one or two more to help me as stewards; and, in process of time a greater number. Let it be remarked, it was I myself, not the people who chose the stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work wherein he was to help me as long as I chose." The same prescription he pleaded with regard to his authority over the lay-preachers. The first of these offered to serve him as sons, as he should think proper to direct. "Observe," said he, "these likewise desired *me*, not I *them*. And here commenced my power to appoint each of these, when, where, and how to labour; that is, while he chose to continue with me; for each had a power to go away when he pleased, as I had also to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still to appoint when, and where, and how each should help me; and to tell any, if I saw cause, 'I do not desire your help any longer.' On these terms, and no other, we joined at first; on these we continue joined. They do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true my reward is with the Lord; but at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care, and often a burden I scarce know how to bear."

His power over the Conference he rested upon the same plea of prescription; but it had originated

with himself; not like his authority over the preachers and the laity, in a voluntary offer of obedience. He, of his own impulse, had invited several clergymen, who acted with him; and all the lay-preachers who at that time served him as sons in the gospel, to meet and advise with him. "*They* did not desire the meeting," said he, "but *I* did, knowing that in a multitude of counsellors, there is safety. And when their number increased, so that it was neither needful nor convenient to invite them all, for several years, I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and these only met at the place appointed; till at length I gave a general permission, that all who desired it might come. Observe: I myself sent for these, of my own free choice; and I sent for them to advise, not govern me. Neither did I, at any of those times, divest myself of any part of that power which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine. What is that power? It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the societies under my care: of choosing and removing stewards; of receiving, or not receiving helpers; of appointing them when, where, and how to help me; and of desiring any of them to meet me, when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought; nay, a hundred times laboured to throw off; so it is on the same considerations, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day."

In reference to himself, as the person in whom the whole and sole authority was vested, Wesley called his preachers by the name of helpers; and designated as assistants those among them who, for the duties which they discharge, have since been denominated superintendents. It soon became expedient to divide the country into circuits. There were, in the year 1749, twenty in England, two in Wales, two in Scotland, and seven in Ireland. In 1791, the year of Mr. Wesley's death, they had increased to seventy-two in England, three in Wales, seven in Scotland, and twenty-eight in Ireland. Every circuit had a certain number of preachers appointed to it, more or less, according to its extent, under an assistant, whose office it was to admit or expel members, take lists of the societies at Easter, hold quarterly meetings, visit the classes quarterly, keep watch-nights and love-feasts, superintend the other preachers, and regulate the whole business of the circuit, spiritual and temporal.

The helpers were not admitted indiscriminately: *gifts*, as well as *grace* for the work, were required. An aspirant was first examined concerning his theological knowledge, that it might be seen whether his opinions were sound: he was then to exhibit his gift of utterance, by preaching before Mr. Wesley; and afterwards to give, either orally or in writing, his reasons for thinking that he was called of God to the ministry. The best proof of this was, that some persons should have been convinced of sin, and converted by his preaching.

If a right belief and a ready utterance were found, and these fruits had followed, the concurrence of the three marks was deemed sufficient evidence of a divine call: he was admitted on probation; with a caution, that he was not to ramble up and down, but to go where the assistant should direct, and there only; and, at the ensuing conference, he might be received into full connexion. After a while the time of probation was found too short, and was extended to four years.

The rules of a helper are strikingly characteristic of Wesley, both in their manner and their spirit.

"1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment: never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your motto be, Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly with young women in private.

4. Take no step towards marriage without first acquainting us with your design.

5. Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing: you know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. Speak evil of no one; else *your* word, especially, would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him,

and that plainly, and as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood (if time permit) or of drawing water; not of cleaning your own * shoes, or your neighbours.

10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time: and, in general, do not *mend* our rules, but *keep* them; nor for wrath, but for conscience sake.

11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most.

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it is

* "Respecting these golden rules," says Mr. Crowther, "it may be proper to observe, 'affecting the gentleman' was not designed to countenance clownishness, or any thing contrary to true Christian courtesy. And when it is said, a preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all, it certainly was not meant to insinuate that a preacher was to be set to do the lowest and most slavish drudgery which any person could find for him to do. I presume the servant of God is the servant of all in gospel labours, and in nothing else. And though he may not be ashamed of cleaning his own shoes, or the shoes of others, yet, I apprehend, they ought to be 'ashamed' who would expect or suffer him so to do, especially such as are instructed and profited by his ministerial labours. And surely they ought to feel some shame also, who would suffer the preacher to go from place to place, day after day, with his shoes and boots uncleaned."

Portraiture of Methodism, p. 277.

your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct; partly in preaching and visiting the flock from house to house; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do *that part* of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory."

Thus did Wesley, who had set so bad an example of obedience, exact it from his own followers as rigidly as the founder of a monastic order. Like those founders, also, he invited his disciples to enter upon a course of life which it required no small degree of enthusiasm and of resolution to embrace. The labour was hard, the provision scanty, and the prospect for those who were superannuated, or worn out in the service, was, on this side the grave, as cheerless as it well could be. When a preacher was admitted into full connexion, he paid one guinea, and from that time half-a-guinea annually, toward the preachers' fund. If he withdrew from the connexion, all that he had subscribed was returned to him; but if he lived to be disabled, he received from the fund an annuity, which should not be less than ten pounds; and his widow was entitled to a sum, according to the exigence of the case, but not exceeding forty.

Some of the itinerant preachers, at one time, entered into trade: the propriety of this was discussed in Conference: it was pronounced evil in itself, and in its consequences, and they were advised to give up every business, except the mi-

nistry, to which they were pledged. There was another more easy and tempting way of eking out their scanty stipends, by printing their own spiritual effusions, and availing themselves of the opportunities afforded, by the system of itinerancy, for selling them. But Mr. Wesley was himself a most voluminous author and compiler: the profits arising from his publications were applied in aid of the expenses of the society, which increased faster than their means: the Methodists, for the most part, had neither time to spare for reading, nor money for books; and the preachers, who consulted their own individual advantage, in this manner, injured the general fund, in proportion as they were successful; it was therefore determined, in Conference, that no preacher should print any thing without Mr. Wesley's consent, nor till it had been corrected by him. The productions which some of them had set forth, both in verse and prose, were censured as having brought a great reproach upon the society, and "much hindered the spreading of more profitable books;" and a regulation was made, that the profits, even of those which might be approved and licensed by the founder, should go into the common stock. But with regard to those which he himself had published for the benefit of the society, and some of which, he said, ought to be in every house, Wesley charged the preachers to exert themselves in finding sale for them. "Carry them with you," said he, "through every round. Exert yourselves in this: be not ashamed; be not weary; leave no

stone unturned." Being cut off from the resources of authorship, some of them began to quack * for the body as well as the soul; and this led to a decision in Conference, that no preacher, who would not relinquish his trade of making and vending pills, drops, balsams, or medicines of any kind, should be considered as a travelling preacher any longer. If their wives sold these things at home, it was said to be well; "but it is not proper for any preacher to hawk them about. It has a bad appearance: it does not well suit the dignity of his calling."

They were restricted also from many indulgences. It was not in Wesley's power, because of the age and country in which he lived, to bind his preachers to a prescribed mode of living by an absolute rule; but he attempted to effect it, as far as circumstances would allow. They were on no account to touch snuff, nor to taste spirituous liquors on any pretence. "Do you," said he, "deny yourselves every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, honour? Are you temperate in all things? To take one instance,—in food? Do you use only that *kind*, and that *degree* which is best both for the body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers? these naturally tend to destroy

* The Baptists used to tolerate such quackery in their ministers. Crosby, in his history of that sect, contrived to inform the reader, that he continued to prepare and sell a certain wonderful tincture, and certain sugar-plumbs for children, "which have been found to bring from them many strange and monstrous worms."—Vol. iii. p. 147.

bodily health. Do you eat only three meals a-day? if four, are you not an excellent pattern to the flock? Do you take no more food than is necessary at each meal? you may know if you do, by a load at your stomach; by drowsiness or heaviness; and, in a while, by weak or bad nerves. Do you use only that *kind* and that *degree* of drink which is best both for your body and soul? Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off, if not for health? When will you begin again? to-day? How often do you drink wine or ale? Every day? Do you *want*, or *waste* it?" He declared his own purpose, of eating only vegetables on Fridays, and taking only toast and water in the morning; and he expected the preachers to observe the same kind of fast.

The course of life which was prescribed for the preachers left them little opportunity for the enjoyment of domestic life. Home could scarcely be regarded as a resting-place by men who were never allowed to be at rest. Wesley insisted upon a frequent and regular change of preachers, because he well knew that the attention of the people was always excited by a new performer in the pulpit. "I know," said he, "were I to preach one whole year in one place, I should preach both myself and my congregation asleep. Nor can I believe it was ever the will of the Lord that any congregation should have one teacher only. We have found, by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. This preacher has one

talent, that another. No one whom I ever yet knew has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation." The institutions of the Jesuits allowed an itinerant father of the company to remain three months in a place, unless any other term were specified in his instructions: but Wesley went farther, and thought it injurious both to the preacher and people, if one of his itinerants should stay six or eight weeks together in one place. "Neither," said he, "can he find matter for preaching every morning and evening; nor will the people come to hear him. Hence he grows cold by lying in bed, and so do the people; whereas, if he never stays more than a fortnight together in one place, he may find matter enough, and the people will gladly hear him." These frequent changes were so gratifying to the people, that the trustees of a meeting-house once expressed an apprehension lest the Conference should impose one preacher on them for many years; and, to guard against this, a provision was inserted in the deed, that "the same preacher should not be sent, ordinarily, above one, never above two years together." There may, perhaps, have been another motive in Wesley's mind: a preacher, who found himself comfortably settled, with a congregation to whom he had made himself agreeable, might be induced to take root there, throw off his dependence upon the connexion, and set up a meeting of his own. Instances of such defection were not wanting, and

the frequent change * of preachers was the likeliest means of preventing them.

No preacher, according to a rule laid down by Conference, was to preach oftener than twice on a week-day, or three times on the Sabbath. One of these sermons was always to be at five in the morning, whenever twenty hearers could be brought together. As the apostolic Eliot used to say to students, Look to it that ye be morning birds! so Wesley continually inculcated the duty of early rising, as equally good for body and soul. "It helps the nerves," he said, "better than a thousand medicines; and especially preserves the sight, and prevents lowness of spirits. Early preaching," he said, "is the glory of the Methodists. Whenever this is dropt, they will dwindle † away into

* "The *people*," says Mr. Crowther, "ought to get great good from the constant change of the preachers; for, to the *preachers*, it is productive of many inconveniences and painful exercises."

† The importance which he attached to this custom appears in his Journal. "I was surprised when I came to Chester, to find that there also morning preaching was quite left off; for this worthy reason, because the people will not come, or, at least, not in the winter: if so, the Methodists are a fallen people. Here is proof: they have *lost their first love*; and they never will or can recover it till they *do the first works*. As soon as I set foot in Georgia, I began preaching at five in the morning; and every communicant, that is, every serious person in the town, constantly attended throughout the year: I mean, came every morning, winter and summer, unless in the case of sickness. They did so till I left the province. In the year 1738, when God began his great work in England, I began preaching at the same hour, winter and summer, and never wanted a congregation. If they will not attend now, they have lost their zeal, and then, it cannot be denied, they are a fallen people; and, in the mean time, we are labouring to secure the preaching-houses to the next generation! In the name of God, let us, if possible, secure the present generation from drawing back to perdition. Let all the preachers, that are still alive to God, join together

nothing." He advised his preachers to begin and end always precisely at the time appointed; and always to conclude the service in about an hour: to suit their subject to the audience, to choose the plainest texts, and keep close to the text; neither rambling from it, nor allegorizing, nor spiritualizing too much. More than once in his Journal he has recorded the death of men who were martyrs to long and loud preaching, and he frequently cautioned his followers against it. To one of them he says, in a curious letter of advice, which he desired might be taken as the surest mark of love, "Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not *cry*;' the word properly means, 'He shall not *scream*.' Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently; but I never scream. I never strain myself: I dare not. I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul." They were instructed also not to pray above eight or ten minutes at most, without intermission, unless for some pressing reason.

Before an aspirant was admitted upon trial as an itinerant, he was exercised as a local preacher; and

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as one man, fast and pray, lift up their voice as a trumpet, be instant in season, out of season, to convince them they are fallen, and exhort them instantly to *repent and do the first works*; this in particular, rising in the morning, without which neither their souls nor bodies can long remain in health."

many persons remained contentedly in this humbler office, which neither took them from their families, nor interfered with their worldly concerns. They carried on their business, whatever that might be, six days in the week, and preached on the seventh: but no person was admitted to this rank, unless he were thought competent by the preachers of the circuit. The places which they were to visit were determined by the assistant, and their conduct underwent an enquiry every quarter. Without their aid, Methodism could not have been kept up over the whole country, widely as it was diffused; and all that they received from the society was a little refreshment, at the cost of the people to whom they preached, and perhaps the hire of a horse for the day.

A still more important part was performed by the leaders, who are to Methodism what the non-commissioned officers are in an army. The leader was appointed by the assistant: it was his business regularly to meet his class, question them, in order, as to their religious affections and practice, and advise, caution, or reprove, as the case might require. If any members absented themselves from the class-meeting, he was to visit them, and enquire into the cause; and he was to render an account to the officiating preacher of those whose conduct appeared suspicious, or was in any way reprehensible. By this means, and by the class-paper for every week, which the leaders were required to keep, and regularly produce, the preachers

obtained a knowledge of every individual member within their circuit; and, by the class-tickets, which were renewed every quarter, a regular census of the society was effected. The leaders not only performed the office of drilling the young recruits, they acted also as the tax-gatherers, and received the weekly contributions of their class, which they paid to the local stewards, and the local stewards to the steward of the circuit.

Thus far the discipline of the Methodists was well devised: if the system itself had been unexceptionable, the spiritual police was perfect. But they were divided into bands as well as classes; and this subdivision, while it answered no one end of possible utility, led to something worse than the worst practice of the Romish church. The men and the women, and the married and the single, met separately in these bands, for the purpose of confessing to each other. They engaged to meet once a-week at least, and to speak, each in order, freely and plainly, the true state of their souls, with the faults they had committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations they had felt during the week.* They were to be asked "as many, and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations:" These four, in particular, at every meeting: What known sin have you committed since our last meeting? What temptations have you met with? How was you delivered? What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or

not? And before any person entered into one of these bands, a promise of the most unreserved openness was required. "Consider, do you desire we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you? Do you desire that, in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom? Is it your desire and design to be on this, and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?" The nature, and the inevitable tendency of this mutual inquisition, must be obvious to every reflecting mind; and it is marvellous, that any man should have permitted his wife * or his daughter to enter into these bands, where it is not possible for innocence to escape contamination. †

* Wesley has himself recorded an instance of mischief arising from these bands. "I searched to the bottom," says he, "a story I had heard in part, and found it another tale of real woe. Two of our society had lived together in uncommon harmony, when one, who met in band with E. F. to whom she had mentioned that she had *found a temptation* toward Dr. F. went and told her husband she *was in love* with him, and that she had it from her own mouth. The spirit of jealousy seized him in a moment, and utterly took away his reason. And some one telling him his wife was at Dr. F.'s, on whom she had called that afternoon, he took a great stick, and ran away, and meeting her in the street, called out Strumpet! strumpet! and struck her twice or thrice. He is now thoroughly convinced of her innocence; but the water cannot be gathered up again. He sticks there—'I do thoroughly forgive you, but I can never love you more.'" After such an example, Wesley ought to have abolished this part of his institutions.

† In one of his letters Wesley says, "I believe Miss F. thought she felt evil before she did, and, by that very thought, gave occasion to its re-entrance." And yet he did not perceive the danger of leading his

The institution of the select society or band was not liable to the same objection. This was to consist of persons who were earnestly athirst for the full image of God, and of those who continually walked in the light of God, having fellowship with the Father and the Son: in other words, of those who had attained to such a degree of spiritual pride, that they professed to be in this state,—the adepts of Methodism, who were not ashamed to take their degree as perfect. "I saw," says Mr. Wesley, "it might be useful to give some advice to those who thus continued in the light of God's countenance, which the rest of their brethren did not want, and probably could not receive. My design was not only to direct them how to press after perfection, to exercise their every grace, and improve every talent they had received, and to incite them to love one another more, and to watch more carefully over each other; but also to have a select company, to whom I might unbosom myself on all occasions, without reserve; and whom I could propose, to all their brethren, as patterns of love, of holiness, and of all good works. They had no need of being incumbered with many rules, having the best rule of all in their hearts." Nevertheless, the judicious injunction was given them, that nothing which was spoken at their meetings

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people into temptation, by making them recur to every latent thought of evil; and compelling them to utter, with their lips, imaginations which might otherwise have been suppressed within their hearts for ever!

should be spoken again. Wesley says, he often felt the advantage of these meetings, and experienced there that, in the multitude of consellors, there is safety. But they placed the untenable doctrine of perfection in so obtrusive and obnoxious a light, that he found it difficult to maintain them; and they seem not to have become a regular part of the system.

The watch-night was another of Wesley's objectionable institutions. It originated with some reclaimed colliers of Kingswood, who, having been accustomed to sit late on Saturday nights at the alehouse, transferred their weekly meeting, after their conversion, to the school-house, and continued there praying and singing hymns far into the morning. Wesley was advised to put an end to this; but, "upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians," he could see no cause to forbid it; because he overlooked the difference between their times and his own, and shut his eyes to the obvious impropriety of midnight meetings. So he appointed them to be held once a month, near the time of full moon. "Exceedingly great," says he, "are the blessings we have found therein; it has generally been an extremely solemn season, when the word of God sunk deep into the hearts even of those who till then knew him not. If it be said, this was only owing to the novelty of the thing, (the circumstance which still draws such multitudes together at those seasons,) or perhaps to

the aweful stillness of the night, I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so: however, the impression then made on many souls has never since been effaced. Now, allowing that God did make use either of the novelty, or any other indifferent circumstance, in order to bring sinners to repentance, yet they are brought, and herein let us rejoice together. Now, may I not put the case farther yet? If I can probably conjecture, that either by the novelty of this ancient custom, or by any other indifferent circumstanee, it is in my power to save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins, am I clear before God if I do not? If I do not snatch that brand out of the burning?"

The practice which Wesley thus revived had been discountenanced, even in the most superstitious Catholic countries, for its inconvenience, and its manifest ill tendency; and therefore it had long been disused. While the converts to his doctrine retained the freshness of their first impression, watch-nights served to keep up the feeling to the pitch at which he wished to maintain it; and if any person, who was almost a Methodist, attended one of these meetings, the circumstances were likely to complete his conversion. For the sake of these advantages, Wesley disregared the scandal which this part of his institutions was sure to occasion; and he seems not to have considered the effect among his own people, when their first fervour should have abated, and the vigils be attended as a mere formality. He also appointed three love-

feasts in a quarter: one for the men, a second for the women, and the third for both together; "that we might together eat bread," he says, "as the ancient Christians did, with gladness and singleness of heart. At these love-feasts (so we termed them, retaining the name, as well as the thing, which was in use from the beginning,) our food is only a little plain cake and water; but we seldom return from them without being fed not only with the meat which perisheth, but with that which endureth to everlasting life." A travelling preacher presides at these meetings: any one who chooses may speak; and the time is chiefly employed in relating what they call their Christian experience. In this point, also, Mr. Wesley disregarded the offence which he gave, by renewing a practice that had notoriously been abolished, because of the abuses to which it led.

It cannot be supposed that a man of his sagacity should have overlooked the objections to which such meetings as the watch-nights and the love-feasts were obnoxious: his temper led him to despise and to defy public opinion; and he saw how well these practices accorded with the interests of Methodism as a separate society. It is not sufficient for such a society that its members should possess a calm, settled principle of religion to be their rule of life and their support in trial: religion must be made a thing of sensation and passion, craving perpetually for sympathy and stimulants, instead of bringing with it peace and contentment.

The quiet regularity of domestic devotion must be exchanged for public performances; the members are to be *professors of religion;* they must have a part to act, which will at once gratify the sense of self-importance, and afford employment for the uneasy and restless spirit with which they are possessed. Wesley complained that family religion was the grand desideratum among the Methodists; but, in reality, his institutions were such as to leave little time for it, and to take away the inclination, by making it appear flat and unprofitable after the excitement of class-meetings, band-meetings, love-feasts, and midnight assemblies.

Whenever a chapel was built, care was taken that it should be settled on the Methodist plan; that is, that the property should be vested, not in trustees, but in Mr. Wesley and the Conference. The usual form among the dissenters would have been fatal to the general scheme of Methodism; "because," said Wesley, "wherever the trustees exert the power of placing and displacing preachers, their itinerant preaching is no more. When they have found a preacher they like, the rotation is at an end; at least till they are tired of him, and turn him out. While he stays, the bridle is in his mouth. He would not dare speak the full and the whole truth; since, if he displeased the trustees, he would be liable to lose his bread; nor would he dare expel a trustee, though ever so ungodly, from the society. The power of the trustees is greater than that of any patron, or of the king himself,

who could *put in* a preacher, but could not *put him out.*" Thus he argued, when a chapel at Birstall had been erroneously settled upon trustees; and the importance of the point was felt so strongly by the Conference, that it was determined, in case these persons would not allow the deed to be cancelled, and substitute one upon the Methodist plan, to make a collection throughout the society, for the purpose of purchasing ground, and building another chapel as near the one in question as possible.

Wesley never wished to have any chapel or burial-ground consecrated; such ceremonies he thought relics of popery, and flatly superstitious. The impossibility of having them consecrated, led him, perhaps, to consider the ceremony in this light, at a time when he had not proceeded so far as to exercise any ecclesiastical function, for which he was not properly authorised. The buildings themselves were of the plainest kind: it was difficult to raise money* even for these; but

* The history of one of these chapels, at Sheerness, is curious. "It is now finished," says Wesley, in his Journal for 1786, "but by means never heard of. The building was undertaken, a few months since, by a little handful of men, without any probable means of finishing it: but God so moved the hearts of the people in the dock, that even those who did not pretend to any religion, carpenters, shipwrights, labourers, ran up at all their vacant hours, and worked with all their might, without any pay. By these means a large square house was soon elegantly finished, both within and without. And it is the neatest building, next to the new chapel in London, of any in the south of England."

A meeting-house at Haslinden, in Lancashire, was built for them on speculation, by a person not connected with the society in any way. He desired only three per cent. for what he laid out, (about 800*l.*) provided the seats let for so much; of which, says Wesley, there is little doubt. This was in 1788.

Mr. Wesley had the happy art of representing that as a matter of principle, which was a matter of necessity; and, in the tastelessness of their chapels, the Methodists were only upon a level with the dissenters of every description. The * octagon, which, of all architectural forms, is the ugliest, he preferred to any other, and wished it to be used wherever the ground would permit: but it has not been generally followed. The directions were, that the windows should be sashes, opening downwards; that there should be no tub-pulpits, and no backs to the seats; and that the men and women should sit apart. A few years before his death, the committee in London proposed to him that families should sit together, and that private pews might be erected; "thus," he exclaims, "overthrowing, at one blow, the discipline which I have been establishing for fifty years!" But, upon farther consideration, they yielded to his opinion.

He prided himself upon the singing in his meet-

* His predilection for this form seems to have arisen from a sight of the Unitarian meeting-house at Norwich, "perhaps," he says, "the most elegant one in Europe. It is eight-square, built of the finest brick, with sixteen sash windows below, as many above, and eight sky-lights in the dome, which, indeed, are purely ornamental. The inside is finished in the highest taste, and is as clean as any nobleman's saloon. The communion-table is fine mahogany: the very latches of the pew-doors are polished brass. How can it be thought that the old coarse Gospel should find admission here?" The sort of humility, which is implied in this sneer, is well characterised by Landor, when he calls it

"A tattered garb that pride wears when deform'd."

It is no wonder that he was struck by the cleanness of the chapel. This curious item occurs in the minutes of Conference for 1776. "Q. 23. Complaint is made that sluts spoil our houses. How can we prevent this? A. Let no known slut live in any of them."

ing houses: there was a talent in his family both for music and verse; and he availed himself, with great judgement of both. A collection of hymns was published for the Society, some few of which were selected from various authors; some were his own composition; but far the greater part were by his brother Charles. Perhaps no poems have ever been so devoutly committed to memory as these, nor quoted so often upon a death-bed. The manner in which they were sung tended to impress them strongly on the mind: the tune was made wholly subservient to the words, not the words to the tune.

The Romanists are indebted for their church-music to the Benedictines, an order to which all Europe is so deeply indebted for many things. Our fine cathedral service is derived from them: may it continue for ever! The psalmody of our churches was a popular innovation, during the first years of the Reformation; and the psalms of Sternhold and Hopkins were *allowed** to be sung, not enjoined. The practice, however, obtained; and having contributed in no slight measure, to the religious revolution, when the passion wherein it originated was gone by, it became a mere interlude in the service, serving no other purpose than that of allowing a little breathing-time to the minister; and the manner in which this interval is filled, where there is no organ to supply the want of singers, or

* "Those who have searched into the matter with the utmost care and curiosity," says Collier, (vol. ii. 326.) could never discover any authority either from the crown or the convocation."

cover their defects, is too often irreverent and disgraceful. Aware of the great advantage to be derived from psalmody, and with an ear, as well as an understanding, alive to its abuse, Wesley made it an essential part of the devotional service in his chapels; and he triumphantly contrasted the practice of his people in this respect, with that of the churches. "Their solemn addresses to God," said he, "are not interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish-clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand, or the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary * on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit and the understanding also; not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold, but in psalms and hymns, which are both sense and poetry, such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic. What they sing is therefore a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service, being selected for that end; not by a poor hum-drum wretch, who can scarcely read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service. Nor does he take just 'two staves,' but more or less as may best raise the soul to God; especially when sung in well-composed and well-adapted

* Yet Wesley has noticed, that he once found at church an uncommon blessing, when he least of all expected it; namely, "while the organist was playing a voluntary."

tunes; not by a handful of wild unawakened striplings but by a whole serious congregation; and these, not lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another, but all standing before God, and praising him lustily, and with a good courage." He especially enjoined that the whole congregation should sing, that there should be no repetition of words, no dwelling upon disjointed syllables, and that they should not sing in parts, but with one heart and voice, in one simultaneous and uninterrupted feeling. *

The preachers were forbidden to introduce any hymns of their own composing; in other respects they had great latitude allowed them: they might use the liturgy, if they pleased, or an abridgment of it, which Mr. Wesley had set forth; or they might discard it altogether, and substitute an extemporaneous service, according to their own taste and that of the congregation. Like the Jesuits, in this respect, they were to adapt themselves to all men. The service was not long: Wesley generally concluded it within the hour.

* This feeling, however, must have been disturbed in a strange manner, if the preachers observed the directions of the first Conference, to guard against formality in singing, by often stopping short, and asking the people, "Now do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt; Did you sing it as unto the Lord, with the spirit and with the understanding also?

CHAPTER XXII.

METHODISM IN WALES AND IN SCOTLAND.

Upon Wesley's first journey into Wales, he thought that most of the inhabitants were indeed *ripe for the Gospel.* "I mean" says he, "if the expression appear strange, they are earnestly desirous of being instructed in it; and as utterly ignorant of it they are as any Creek or Cherokee Indian. I do not mean they are ignorant of the name of Christ: many of them can say both the Lord's Prayer and the Belief; nay, and some all the Catechism: but take them out of the road of what they have learned by rote, and they know no more (nine in ten of those with whom I conversed) either of Gospel salvation, or of that faith whereby alone we can be saved, than Chicali or Tomo Chachi." This opinion was formed during a journey through the most civilized part of South Wales. He was not deceived in judging that the Welsh were a people highly susceptible of such impressions as he designed to make; but he found himself disabled in his progress, by his ignorance of their language. "Oh," he exclaims, "what a heavy curse was the confusion of tongues, and how grievous are the effects of it. All the birds of the air, all the beasts of the field, understand the

language of their own species; man only is a barbarian to man, unintelligible to his own brethren!" This difficulty was insuperable. He found, however, a few Welsh clergymen, who entered into his views with honest ardour, and an extravagance of a new kind grew up in their congregations. After the preaching was over, any one who pleased gave out a verse of a hymn; and this they sung over and over again, with all their might and main thirty or forty times, till some of them worked themselves into a sort of drunkenness or madness: they were then violently agitated, and leaped up and down, in all manner of postures, frequently for hours together. "I think," says Wesley, "there needs no great penetration to understand this. They are honest, upright men, who really feel the love of God in their hearts; but they have little experience either of the ways of God or the devices of Satan; so he serves himself by their simplicity, in order to wear them out, and to bring a discredit on the work of God." This was the beginning of the * Jumpers.

Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, the remarkable men who made the secession from the Scotch church, invited Whitefield into Scotland, before his breach with Wesley. Accordingly, in the year 1741, he accepted the invitation; and thinking it

* "At seven in the morning," says Whitefield, "have I seen, perhaps, ten thousand from different parts, in the midst of a sermon, crying, *Gogumniant bendyitti*, ready to leap for joy." Had they been reprehended at that time, this extravagant folly might have been prevented.

proper that they should have the first-fruits of his ministry in that kingdom, preached his first sermon in the seceding meeting-house belonging to Ralph Erskine, at Dumferline. The room was thronged; and when he had named his text, the rustling which was made by the congregation opening their bibles all at once surprised him, who had never, till then, witnessed a similar practice. A few days afterwards he met the Associate Presbytery of the Seceders by their own desire; a set of grave venerable men. They soon proposed to form themselves into a presbytery, and were proceeding to choose a moderator, when Mr. Whitefield asked them for what purpose this was to be done: they made answer, it was to discourse and set him right about the matter of church govermnent, and the solemn league and covenant. Upon this Mr. Whitefield observed, they might save themselves the trouble, for he had no scruples about it; and that settling church government, and preaching about the solemn league and covenant, was not his plan. And then he gave them some account of the history of his own mind, and the course of action in which he was engaged. This, however, was not satisfactory to the Associate Presbytery, though one of the synod apologised for him, urging that, as he had been born and bred in England, and had never studied the point, he could not be supposed to be perfectly acquainted with the nature of their covenants, and therefore they ought to have patience with him. This was of no avail: it was answered, that no indulgence could be shown him; for Eng-

land had revolted most with respect to church government, and that he could not but be acquainted with the matter in debate. It was a new thing for Whitefield, who had been accustomed to receive homage wherever he went, to be schooled in this manner; but he bore this arrogant behaviour with great complacency, and replied, that indeed he never yet had studied the solemn league and covenant, because he had been too busy about things which, in his judgement, were of greater importance. Several of them then cried out, that every pin of the tabernacle was precious. Whitefield was ready in reply: he told them that, in every building, there were outside and inside workmen; that the latter was at that time his province; and that, if they thought themselves called to the former, they might proceed in their own way, as he would do in his. The power of these persons happily, was not so inquisitorial as their disposition; and when he seriously asked them what they wished him to do, they answered, that they did not desire him immediately to subscribe to the solemn league and covenant, but that he would preach for them exclusively till he had farther light. "And why for them alone?" he enquired. Ralph Erskine made answer, "They were the Lord's people." "I then," says Whitefield, "asked, whether there were no other Lord's people but themselves? and, supposing all others were the devil's people, they certainly," I told them, "had more need to be preached to, and therefore I was more and more determined to go out into the highways and hedges;

aud that if the Pope himself would lend me his pulpit, I would gladly proclaim the righteousness of Jesus Christ therein." Soon after this the company broke up; and one of these otherwise venerable men immediately went into the meeting-house, and preached upon these words, "Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night? The watchman said, the morning cometh, and also the night; if ye will enquire, enquire ye; return; come." I attended; but the good man so spent himself, in the former part of his sermon, in talking against prelacy, the common-prayer-book, the surplice, the rose in the hat, and such like externals, that when he came to the latter part of his text, to invite poor sinners to Jesus Christ, his breath was so gone, that he could scarce be heard. What a pity that the last was not first, and the first last! The consequence of all this was an open breach. I retired, I wept, I prayed, and, after preaching in the fields, sate down and dined with them, and then took a final * leave.

* In honour of Whitefield, I annex here part of a letter upon this subject written a few days after this curious scene, and addressed to a son of one of the Erskines. "The treatment I met with from the Associate Presbytery was not altogether such as I expected. It grieved me as much as it did you. I could scarce refrain from bursting into a flood of tears. I wish all were like-minded with your honoured father and uncle, matters then would not be carried on with so high an hand. I fear they are led too much. Supposing the scheme of government which the Associate Presbytery contend for to be scriptural, yet forbearance and long-suffering is to be exercised towards such as may differ from them: and, I am verily persuaded, there is no such form of government prescribed in the book of God, as excludes a toleration of all other forms whatsoever. Was the New Testament outward tabernacle to be built as punctual as the Old, as punctual directions would have been given about the building it; whereas it is only deduced by

At table, a gentlewoman said, she had heard that I had told some people that the Associate Presbytery were building a Babel. I said, "Madam, it is quite true; and I believe the Babel will soon fall down about their ears. But enough of this. Lord, what is man — what the best of men — but men at the best!"

Coming as a stranger into Scotland, and being free from all prejudice and passion upon the subject, Whitefield saw the folly and the mischief of the schisms in which his new acquaintance were engaged. They spared no pains to win him over to their side. "I find," said he, "Satan now turns himself into an angel of light, and stirs up God's children to tempt me to come over to some particular party." To one of his correspondents he replies, "I wish you would not trouble yourself or me in writing about the corruption of the Church of England. I believe there is no church

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inference; and thus we see Independents, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians bring the same text to support their particular scheme: and I believe Jesus Christ thereby would teach us to exercise forbearance and long-suffering to each other. Was the Associate Presbytery scheme to take effect, out of conscience, if they acted consistently, they must restrain and grieve, if not persecute, many of God's children, who could not possibly come into their measures: and I doubt not but their present violent methods, together with the corruptions of that assembly, will cause many to turn Independents, and set up particular churches of their own. This was the effect of Archbishop Laud's acting with so high a hand; and whether it be presbytery or episcopacy, if managed in the same manner, it will be productive of the same effects. O, dear Sir, I love and honour your pious father. Remember me in the kindest manner to the good old man. I pray God his last days may not be employed too much in the non-essentials of religion."

perfect under heaven; but as God, by his providence, is pleased to send me forth simply to preach the Gospel to all, I think there is no need of casting myself out." He was invited to Aberdeen by the minister of one of the kirks in that city; but the minister's co-pastor had prepossessed the magistrates against him, so that when he arrived they refused to let him preach in the kirk-yard. They had, however, sufficient curiosity to attend when he officiated in his friend's pulpit; the congregation was very large, and, in Whitefield's own words, "light and life fled all around." In the afternoon it was the other pastor's turn: he began his prayers as usual; but, in the midst of them, he named Whitefield by name, whom he knew to be then present, and intreated the Lord to forgive the dishonour that had been put upon him, when that man was suffered to preach in that pulpit. Not satisfied with this, he renewed the attack in his sermon, reminded his congregation that this person was a curate of the Church of England, and quoted some passages from his first printed discourses, which he said were grossly Arminian. "Most of the congregation," says Whitefield, "seemed surprised and chagrined; especially his good-natured colleague, who, immediately after sermon, without consulting me in the least, stood up, and gave notice that Mr. Whitefield would preach in about half an hour. The interval being so short, the magistrates returned into the sessions-house, and the congregation patiently waited, big with expectation of hearing my resentment. At the

time appointed I went up, and took no other notice of the good man's ill-timed zeal, than to observe, in some part of my discourse, that if the good old gentleman had seen some of my later writings, wherein I had corrected several of my former mistakes, he would not have expressed himself in such strong terms. The people being thus diverted from controversy with man, were deeply impressed with what they heard from the word of God. All was hushed, and more than solemn. And on the morrow the magistrates sent for me, expressed themselves quite concerned at the treatment I had met with, and begged I would accept of the freedom of the city."

This triumph Whitefield obtained, as much by that perfect self-command which he always possessed in public, as by his surpassing oratory. But wherever he could obtain a hearing, his oratory was triumphant, and his success in Scotland was, in some respects, greater than it had yet been in England. "Glory be to God," he says, "he is doing great things here. I walk in the continual sunshine of his countenance. Congregations consist of many thousands. Never did I see so many bibles, nor people look into them, when I am expounding, with such attention. Plenty of tears flow from the hearers' eyes. I preach twice daily, and expound at private houses at night; and am employed in speaking to souls under distress great part of the day. Every morning I have a constant levee of wounded souls, many of whom are quite slain by the law. At seven in the morning (this

was at Edinburgh) we have a lecture in the fields, attended not only by the common people, but persons of great rank. I have reason to think several of the latter sort are coming to Jesus. I am only afraid lest people should idolize the instrument, and not look enough to the glorious Jesus, in whom alone I desire to glory. I walk continually in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. The love of Christ quite strikes me dumb. O grace, grace! let that be my song." In Scotland it was that he first found access to people of rank. "Saints," says he, "have been stirred up and edified; and many others, I believe, are translated from darkness to light, and from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God. The good that has been done is inexpressible. I am intimate with three noblemen, and several ladies of quality, who have a great liking for the things of God. I am now writing in an earl's house, surrounded with fine furniture; but, glory be to free grace, my soul is in love only with Jesus!"

His exertions increased with his success. "Yesterday," he says, "I preached three times, and lectured at night. This day Jesus has enabled me to preach seven times; once in the church, twice at the girl's hospital, once in the park, once at the old people's hospital, and afterwards twice at a private house; notwithstanding, I am now as fresh as when I arose in the morning. 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount on wings like eagles.' It would delight your soul to see the effects of the power of God.

Both in the church and park the Lord was with us. The girls in the hospital were exceedingly affected, and so were the standers-by. One of the mistresses told me, she is now awakened in the morning by the voice of prayer and praise; and the master of the boys says, that they meet together every night to sing and pray; and when he goes to their rooms at night, to see if all be safe, he generally disturbs them at their devotions. The presence of God at the old people's hospital was really very wonderful. The Holy Spirit seemed to come down like a mighty rushing wind. The mourning of the people was like the weeping in the valley of Hadad-Rimmon. They appear more and more hungry. Every day I hear of some fresh good wrought by the power of God. I scarce know how to leave Scotland."

The representation thus given by this remarkable man, of the effect which his preaching produced upon all ranks and descriptions of people, is not exaggerated. Dr. Franklin has justly observed, that it would have been fortunate for his reputation if he had left no written works, his talents would then have been estimated by the effect which they are known to have produced; for, on this point, there is the evidence of witnesses whose credibility cannot be disputed. Whitefield's writings, of every kind, are certainly below mediocrity. They afford the measure of his knowledge and of his intellect, but not of his genius as a preacher. His printed sermons, instead of being, as is usual, the most elaborate and finished dis-

courses of their author, have indeed the disadvantage of being precisely those upon which the least care had been bestowed. This may be easily explained.

"By hearing him often," says Franklin, "I came to distinguish easily between sermons newly composed, and those which he had often preached in the course of his travels. His delivery of the latter was so improved by frequent repetition, that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of voice, was so perfectly well turned, and well placed, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse: a pleasure of much the same kind with that received from an excellent piece of music. This is an advantage itinerant preachers have over those who are stationary, as the latter cannot well improve their delivery of a sermon by so many rehearsals." It was a great advantage, but it was not the only one, nor the greatest which he derived from repeating his discourses, and reciting instead of reading them. Had they been delivered from a written copy, one delivery would have been like the last; the paper would have operated like a spell, from which he could not depart — invention sleeping, while the utterance followed the eye. But when he had nothing before him except the audience whom he was addressing, the judgement and the imagination, as well as the memory, were called forth. Those parts were omitted which had been felt to come feebly from the tongue, and fall heavily upon the ear, and their place was sup-

plied by matter newly laid-in in the course of his studies, or fresh from the feeling of the moment. They who lived with him could trace him in his sermons to the book which he had last been reading, or the subject which had recently taken his attention. But the salient points of his oratory were not prepared passages, — they were bursts of passion, like jets from a Geyser, when the spring is in full play.

The theatrical talent which he displayed in boyhood manifested itself strongly in his oratory. When he was about to preach, whether it was from a pulpit, or a table in the streets, or a rising ground, he appeared with a solemnity of manner, and an anxious expression of countenance, that seemed to show how deeply he was possessed with a sense of the importance of what he was about to say. His elocution was perfect. They who heard him most frequently could not remember that he ever stumbled at a word, or hesitated for want of one. He never faultered, unless when the feeling to which he had wrought himself overcame him, and then his speech was interrupted by a flow of tears. Sometimes he would appear to lose all self-command, and weep exceedingly, and stamp loudly and passionately; and sometimes the emotion of his mind exhausted him, and the beholders felt a momentary apprehension even for his life. And, indeed, it is said, that the effect of this vehemence upon his bodily frame was tremendous; that he usually vomited after he had preached, and sometimes discharged in this manner, a con-

siderable quantity of blood. But this was when the effort was over, and nature was left at leisure to relieve herself. While he was on duty, he controlled all sense of infirmity or pain, and made his advantage of the passion to which he had given way. "You blame me for weeping," he would say, "but how can I help it, when you will not weep for yourselves, though your immortal souls are upon the verge of destruction, and, for aught I know, you are hearing your last sermon, and may never more have an opportunity to have Christ offered to you!"

Sometimes he would set before his congregation the agony of our Saviour, as though the scene was actually before them. "Look yonder!" he would say, stretching out his hand, and pointing while he spake, "what is it that I see? It is my agonizing Lord! Hark, hark! do you not hear?—O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" This he introduced frequently in his sermons; and one who lived with him says, the effect was not destroyed by repetition; even to those who knew what was coming, it came as forcibly as if they had never heard it before. In this respect it was like fine stage acting: and, indeed, Whitefield indulged in an histrionic manner of preaching, which would have been offensive if it had not been rendered admirable by his natural gracefulness and inimitable power. Sometimes, at the close of a sermon, he would personate a judge about to perform the last awful part of his office.

With his eyes full of tears, and an emotion that made his speech faulter, after a pause which kept the whole audience in breathless expectation of what was to come, he would say, "I am now going to put on my condemning cap. Sinner, I must do it: I must pronounce sentence upon you!" and then, in a tremendous strain of eloquence, describing the eternal punishment of the wicked, he recited the words of Christ, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." When he spoke of St. Peter, how, after the cock crew, he went out and wept bitterly, he had a fold of his gown ready, in which he hid his face.

Perfect as it was, histrionism like this would have produced no lasting effect upon the mind, had it not been for the unaffected earnestness and the indubitable sincerity of the preacher, which equally characterized his manner, whether he rose to the height of passion in his discourse, or won the attention of the motley crowd by the introduction of familiar stories, and illustrations adapted to the meanest * capacity. To such digressions his disposition led him, which was naturally inclined to a comic playfulness. Minds of a certain power will

* Wesley says of him, in his Journal, "how wise is God in giving different talents to different preachers! Even the little improprieties both of his language and manner, were a means of profiting many who would not have been touched by a more correct discourse, or a more calm and regular manner of speaking." St. Augustine somewhere says, that is the best key which opens the door: *quid enim prodest clavis aurea si aperire quod volumus non potest? aut quod obest lignea, si hoc potest, quando nihil quærimus nisi patere quod clausum est?*

sometimes express their strongest feelings with a levity at which formalists are shocked, and which dull men are wholly unable to understand. But language which, when coldly repeated, might seem to border upon irreverence and burlesque, has its effect in popular preaching, when the intention of the speaker is perfectly understood: it is suited to the great mass of the people, it is felt by them when better things would have produced no impression, and it is borne away when wiser arguments would have been forgotten. There was another and more uncommon way in which Whitefield's peculiar talent sometimes was indulged: he could direct his discourse toward an individual so skilfully, that the congregation had no suspicion of any particular purport in that part of the sermon; while the person at whom it was aimed felt it, as it was directed, in its full force. There was sometimes a degree of sportiveness * almost akin to mischief in his humour.

* Mr. Winter relates a curious anecdote of his preaching at a maid-servant who had displeased him by some negligence in the morning. "In the evening," says the writer, "before the family retired to rest, I found her under great dejection, the reason of which I did not apprehend; for it did not strike me that, in exemplifying a conduct inconsistent with the Christian's professed fidelity to his Redeemer, he was drawing it from remissness of duty in a living character; but she felt it so sensibly, as to be greatly distressed by it, until he relieved her mind by his usually amiable deportment. The next day, being about to leave town, he called out to her 'farewell:' she did not make her appearance, which he remarked to a female friend at dinner, who replied, 'Sir, you have exceedingly wounded poor Betty.' This excited in him a hearty laugh; and when I shut the coach door upon him, he said, 'Be sure to remember me to Betty; tell her the account is settled, and that I have nothing more against her.'"

Remarkable instances are related of the manner in which he impressed his hearers. A man at Exeter stood with stones in his pocket, and one in his hand, ready to throw at him; but he dropped it before the sermon was far advanced, and going up to him after the preaching was over, he said, "Sir, I came to hear you with an intention to break your head; but God, through your ministry, has given me a broken heart." A ship-builder was once asked what he thought of him. "Think!" he replied, "I tell you, Sir, every Sunday that I go to my parish church, I can build a ship from stem to stern under the sermon; but, were it to save my soul, under Mr. Whitefield, I could not lay a single plank." Hume * pronounced him the most ingenious preacher he had ever heard; and said, it was worth while to go twenty miles to hear him. But, perhaps, the greatest proof of his persuasive powers was, when he drew from Franklin's pocket the money which that clear cool reasoner had determined not to give: it was for the orphan-house at Savannah. "I did not," says the American philosopher, "disapprove of the design: but as

* One of his flights of oratory, not in the best taste, is related on Hume's authority. "After a solemn pause, Mr. Whitefield thus addressed his audience:— The attendant angel is just about to leave the threshold, and ascend to Heaven; and shall he ascend and not bear with him the news of one sinner, among all the multitude, reclaimed from the error of his ways! To give the greater effect to this exclamation, he stamped with his foot, lifted up his hands and eyes to Heaven, and cried aloud, Stop, Gabriel! stop, Gabriel! stop, ere you enter the sacred portals, and yet carry with you the news of one sinner converted to God!" Hume said this address was accompanied with such animated, yet natural action, that it surpassed any thing he ever saw or heard in any other preacher.

Georgia was then destitute of materials and workmen, and it was proposed to send them from Philadelphia at a great expense, I thought it would have been better to have built the house at Philadelphia, and brought the children to it. This I advised; but he was resolute in his first project, rejected my counsel, and I therefore refused to contribute. I happened, soon after, to attend one of his sermons, in the course of which I perceived he intended to finish with a collection, and I silently resolved he should get nothing from me. I had in my pocket a handful of copper money, three or four silver dollars, and five pistoles in gold. As he proceeded I began to soften, and concluded to give the copper; another stroke of his oratory made me ashamed of that, and determined me to give the silver; and he finished so admirably, that I emptied my pocket wholly into the collector's dish, gold * and all."

No wonder that such a preacher should be admired and followed in a country where the habits of the people were devotional. On his second visit to Scotland, he was met on the shore at Leith by

* "At this sermon," continues Franklin, "there was also one of our club, who, being of my sentiments respecting the building in Georgia, and suspecting a collection might be intended, had, by precaution, emptied his pockets before he came from home: towards the conclusion of the discourse, however, he felt a strong inclination to give, and applied to a neighbour, who stood near him, to lend him some money for the purpose. The request was fortunately made to perhaps the only man in the company who had the firmness not to be affected by the preacher. His answer was, 'At any other time, friend Hopkinson, I would lend to thee freely, but not now; for thee seems to me to be out of thy right senses."

multitudes, weeping and blessing him, and they followed his coach to Edinburgh, pressing to welcome him when he alighted, and to hold him in their arms. Seats, with awnings, were erected in the park, in the form of an amphitheatre, for his preaching. Several youths left their parents and masters to follow him as his servants and children in the Gospel; but he had sense enough to show them their error, and send them back. The effect which he produced was maddening. At Cambuslang it exceeded any thing which he had ever witnessed in his career. "I preached at two," he says, "to a vast body of people, and at six in the evening, and again at nine. Such a commotion, surely, never was heard of, especially at eleven at night. For about an hour and a half there was such weeping, so many falling into deep distress, and expressing it various ways, as is inexpressible. The people seem to be slain by scores. They are carried off, and come into the house, like soldiers wounded in and carried off a field of battle. Their cries and agonies are exceedingly affecting. Mr. M. preached, after I had ended, till past one in the morning, and then could scarce persuade them to depart. All night, in the fields, might be heard the voice of prayer and praise. Some young ladies were found by a gentlewoman praising God at break of day: she went and joined with them." Soon afterwards he returned there to assist at the sacrament. "Scarce ever," he says, "was such a sight seen in Scotland. There were, undoubtedly, upwards of twenty thousand persons. Two

tents were set up, and the holy sacrament was administered in the fields. When I began to serve a table, the power of God was felt by numbers; but the people crowded so upon me, that I was obliged to desist, and go to preach at one of the tents, whilst the ministers served the rest of the tables. God was with them, and with his people. There was preaching all day by one or another; and in the evening, when the sacrament was over, at the request of the ministers, I preached to the whole congregation. I preached about an hour and a half. Surely it was a time much to be remembered. On Monday morning I preached again to near as many; but such an universal stir I never saw before. The motion fled as swift as lightning from one end of the auditory to another. You might have seen thousands bathed in tears: some at the same time wringing their hands, others almost swooning, and others crying out and mourning over a pierced Saviour."

The Erskines were astonished at all this. One of the associate presbytery published a pamphlet against him, wherein, with the true virulence of bigotry, he ascribed these things to the influence of the devil; and the heads of the seceders appointed a public fast to humble themselves for his being in Scotland, whither they themselves had invited him, and for what they termed the delusion at Cambuslang. They might have so called it, with more propriety, if they had not been under a delusion themselves; for Whitefield perfectly understood their feelings, when he said, "all this

because I would not consent to preach only for them till I had light into, and could take the solemn league and covenant!" He made many other visits to Scotland; and there, indeed, he seems to have obtained that introduction to persons of rank, which in its consequences led to the establishment of a college for Calvinistic Methodism in England. But he aimed at nothing more than could be produced by his own preaching; it was neither congenial to his talents nor his views to organize a body of followers; and, in the intervals between his visits, the seed which he had scattered was left to grow up, or to wither as it might.

Wesley had other views: his aim, wherever he went, was to form a society. It was not till ten years after his former colleague had first visited Scotland, that he resolved to go there. A reconciliation had then taken place between them, — for enmity could not be lasting between two men who knew each other's sincerity and good intentions so well, — and Whitefield would have dissuaded him from going. "You have no business there," he said; "for your principles are so well known, that if you spoke like an angel, none would hear you; and if they did, you would have nothing to do but to dispute with one and another from morning to night." Wesley replied, "If God sends me, people will hear. And I will give them no provocation to dispute; for I will studiously avoid controverted points, and keep to the fundamental truths of Christianity; and if any still begin to dispute, they may, but I will not dispute with them." He was

however, so aware of the bitter hostility with which Arminian principles would be received in Scotland, that, he says, when he went into that kingdom, he had no intention of preaching there; nor did he imagine that any persons would desire him so to do. He might have reckoned with more confidence upon the curiosity of the people. He was invited to preach at Musselborough; the audience remained like statutes from the beginning of the sermon till the end, and he flattered himself that "the prejudice which the devil had been several years planting, was torn up by the roots in one hour." From this time Scotland was made a part of his regular rounds. "Surely," says he, "with God nothing is impossible! Who would have believed, five-and-twenty years ago, either that the minister would have desired it, or that I should have consented to preach in a Scotch kirk!"

He flattered himself egregiously when he accepted these beginnings as omens of good success, and when he supposed that the prejudice against him was eradicated. An old Burgher minister at Dalkeith preached against him, affirming that, if he died in his present sentiments, he would be damned; and the fanatic declared that he would stake his own salvation upon it. It was well for him that these people were not armed with temporal authority. "The Seceders," says Wesley, "who have fallen in my way, are more uncharitable than the Papists themselves. I never yet met a Papist who *avowed* the principle of murdering heretics. But a Seceding minister being asked, 'Would not you, if

it was in your power, cut the throats of all the Methodists?' replied directly, 'Why, did not Samuel hew Agag in pieces before the Lord?' I have not yet met a Papist in this kingdom who would tell me to my face, all but themselves must be damned; but I have seen Seceders enough who make no scruple to affirm, none but themselves could be saved. And this is the natural consequence of their doctrine; for, as they hold that we are saved by faith alone, and that faith is the holding such and such opinions, it follows, all who do not hold those opinions have no faith, and therefore cannot be saved." Even Whitefield, predestinarian as he was, was regarded as an abomination by the Seceders: how, then, was it possible that they should tolerate Wesley, who taught that redemption was offered to all mankind? A Methodist one day comforted a poor woman, whose child appeared to be dying, by assuring her that, for an infant, death would only be the exchange of this miserable life for a happy eternity; and the Seceder, to whose flock she belonged, was so shocked at this doctrine, that the deep-dyed Calvinist devoted the next Sabbath to the task of convincing his people, that the souls of all non-elect infants were doomed to certain and inevitable damnation.

But it was Wesley's fortune to meet with an obstacle in Scotland more fatal to Methodism than the fiercest opposition would have been. Had his followers been more generally opposed, they would have multiplied faster: opposition would have in-

flamed their zeal; it was neglected, and died away. From time to time he complains in his Journal of the cold insensibility of the people. "O what a difference is there between the living stones," he says, speaking of the Northumbrians, "and the dead unfeeling multitudes in Scotland. At Dundee," he observes, "I admire the people; so decent, so serious, and so perfectly unconcerned!" "At Glasgow I preached on the Old Green to a people, the greatest part of whom *hear* much, *know* every thing, and *feel* nothing." They had been startled by the thunder and lightning of Whitefield's oratory: but they were as unmoved by the soft persuasive rhetoric of Wesley, as by one of their own Scotch mists.

Wesley endeavoured to account for this mortifying failure, and to discover "what could be the reason why the hand of the Lord (who does nothing without a cause) was almost entirely stayed in Scotland." He imputed it to the unwillingness of those, who were otherwise favourably inclined to admit the preaching of illiterate men; and to the rude bitterness and bigotry of those who regarded an Arminian as an Infidel, and the church of England as bad as the church of Rome. The Scotch bigots, he said, were beyond all others. He answered, before a large congregation at Dundee, most of the objections which had been made to him.—He was a member of the church of England, he said, but he loved good men of every church. He always used a short private prayer when he attended the public service of God: why did not they do the same? was it not according

to the bible? He stood whenever he was singing the praises of God in public; were there not plain precedents for this in Scripture? He always knelt before the Lord when he prayed in public; and generally, in public he used the Lord's Prayer, because Christ has taught us, when we pray, to say, Our Father, which art in heaven. But it was not by such frivolous objections as these that the success of Methodism in Scotland was impeded. The real cause of its failure was, that it was not wanted — that there was no place for it: the discipline of the kirk was not relaxed, the clergy possessed great influence over their parishioners, the children were piously brought up, the population had not out-grown the church-establishment, and the Scotch, above all other people, deserved the praise of being a frugal, industrious, and religious nation.

Obvious as this is, Wesley seems not to have perceived it; and it is evident that he regarded both the forms and discipline of the church of Scotland, with a disposition rather to detect what was* objectionable, than to acknowledge what was

* One of his charges against the Scotch clergy was, that "with pride, bitterness, and bigotry, self-indulgence was joined; self-denial was little taught and practised. It is well if some of them did not despise or even condemn all self-denial in things indifferent, as in apparel or food, as nearly allied to popery." (Journal x. p. 20.) And in one of his sermons he says, "there is always a fast-day in the week preceding the administration of the Lord's Supper (in Scotland). But occasionally looking into a book of accounts, in one of their vestries, I observed so much set down for the dinners of the ministers on the fast day. And I am informed there is the same article in them all. And is there any doubt but that the people fast just as their ministers do. But what a farce is this! what a miserable burlesque upon a plain Christian duty!" (Works, vol. x. p. 419.)

good. "Lodging with a sensible man," he writes, "I enquired particularly into the present discipline of the Scotch parishes. In one parish, it seems, there are twelve ruling elders; in another, there are fourteen. And what are these? men of great sense and deep experience? Neither one nor the other; but they are the richest men in the parish. And are the *richest*, of course, the *best* and the *wisest* men? Does the bible teach this? I fear not. What manner of governors, then, will these be? Why, they are generally just as capable of governing a parish, as of commanding an army." Had he been free from prejudice, instead of being led away by an abuse of words, he would have perceived how the fact stood, — that the elders were required to be respectable in their circumstances, as well as in character; and that, without that respectability, they could not have obtained respect. That the forms of the kirk, or, rather, its want of forms, should offend him, is not surprising. "O," he cries, "what a difference is there between the English and the Scotch mode of burial! The English does honour to human nature, and even to the poor remains that were once a temple of the Holy Ghost: but when I see in Scotland a coffin put into the earth, and covered up without a word spoken, it reminds me of what was spoken concerning Jehoiakim, *he shall be buried with the burial of an ass.*" It was, indeed, no proof of judgement, or of feeling, to reject the finest and most affecting ritual that ever was composed — a service that finds its way to the heart, when the heart stands most in need of such conso-

lation, and is open to receive it. Yet Wesley might have known, that the silent interment of the Scotch is not without solemnity; and, in their lonely burial-grounds, and family burial-places, he might have seen something worthy of imitation in England.

Writing at Glasgow, he says, "My spirit was moved within me at the sermons I heard, both morning and afternoon. They contained much truth, but were no more likely to awaken one soul than an Italian opera." The truth was, that he did not understand the Scotch character, and therefore condemned the practice of those preachers who did. "I spoke as closely as I could," he says of his own sermons, "and made a pointed application to the hearts of all that were present. I am convinced this is the only way whereby we can do any good in Scotland. This very day I heard many excellent truths delivered in the kirk; but as there was no application, it was likely to do as much good as the singing of a lark. I wonder the pious ministers in Scotland are not sensible of this: they cannot but see that no sinners are convinced of sin, none converted to God by this way of preaching; how strange is it then, that neither reason nor experience teaches them to take a better way!" They aimed at no such effect. The new-birth of the Methodists, their instantaneous conversions, their assurance, their sanctification, and their perfection, were justly regarded as extravagances by the Scotch as well as by the English clergy.

It was with more reason that Wesley groaned over the manner in which the Reformation had

been effected in Scotland; and, when he stood amid the ruins of Aberbrothock, exclaimed, "God, deliver us from reforming mobs!". Nor would he admit of the apology that is offered for such havoc, and for the character of John Knox. "I know," he says, "it is commonly said, the work to be done *needed* such a spirit. Not so: the work of God does not, cannot *need* the work of the devil to forward it. And a calm even spirit goes through rough work far better than a furious one. Although, therefore, God did use, at the time of the Reformation, sour, overbearing, passionate men, yet he did not use them *because* they were such; but *notwithstanding* they were so. And there is no doubt he would have used them much more, had they been of a humbler and milder spirit." On the other hand, he bore testimony to the remarkable decorum with which public worship was conducted by the Episcopalians in Scotland: it exceeded any thing which he had seen in England: and he admitted, that even his own congregations did not come up to it.

He did, however, this justice to the Scotch, that he acknowledged they were never offended at plain dealing; and that, in this respect, they were a pattern to all mankind. Nor did he ever meet with the slightest molestation from mobs, or the slightest insult. One day, however, a warrant was issued against him at Edinburgh, by the sheriff, and he was carried to a house adjoining the Tolbooth. A certain George Sutherland, who, to his own mishap, had at one time been a member of the society, had deposed, that Hugh San-

derson, one of John Wesley's preachers, had taken from his wife one hundred pounds in money, and upwards of thirty pounds in goods; and had, besides that, terrified her into madness; so that, through the want of her help, and the loss of business, he was damaged five hundred pounds. He had deposed also, that the said John Wesley and Hugh Sanderson, to evade his pursuit, were preparing to fly the country; and, upon these grounds, had obtained a warrant to search for, seize, and incarcerate them in the Tolbooth, till they should find security for their appearance. The sheriff, with great indiscretion, granted this warrant against Wesley, who could in no way be held legally responsible for the conduct of any of his preachers; but when the affair was tried, the accusation was proved to be so false and calumnious, that the prosecutor was heavily fined. *

Looking for any cause of failure rather than the real one, Wesley imputed the want of success in Scotland to the disposition which his preachers manifested to remain stationary there. "We are not called," he says, "to sit still in one place: it is neither for the health of our souls nor bodies: we will have travelling preachers in Scotland, or none. I will serve the Scotch as we do the English, or leave them. While I live, itinerant preachers shall be itinerants, if they choose to remain in connection with us. The *thing* is fixed: the *manner* of effecting it is to be considered." But here

* One thousand pounds, says Wesley in his Journal: and omits to add, that it was one thousand pounds Scotch, *Anglicè*, A thousand shillings.

lay the difficulty; for the spiritual warfare of Methodism was carried on upon the principle of deriving means from its conquests; and the errant-preacher, who failed of success in his expeditions, oftentimes fasted, when there was no virtue of self-denial in the compulsory abstinence.

A curious instance of this occurred in the case of Thomas Taylor, one of those preachers who tempered zeal with judgement, and who found means, during his itinerancy, by the strictest economy of time, to acquire both the Greek and Hebrew languages. This person was appointed to Glasgow. He had gone through hard service in Wales and in Ireland, in wild countries, and among wild men: but this populous city presented a new scene, and offered something more discouraging than either bodily fatigue or bodily danger. There were no Methodists here, no place of entertainment, no place to preach in, no friend with whom to communicate: it was a hard winter, and he was in a strange land. Having, however, taken a lodging, he gave out that he should preach on the green: a table was carried to the place, and going there at the appointed time, he found — two barbers' boys and two old women waiting. "My very soul," he says, "sunk within me. I had travelled by land and by water near six hundred miles to this place, and behold my congregation! None but they who have experienced it can tell what a task it is to stand out in the open air to preach to nobody, especially in such a place as Glasgow!" Nevertheless, he mounted his table, and began to sing; the singing he had entirely to himself; but

perseverance brought about him some two hundred poor people; and continuing, day after day, he collected at last large audiences. One evening, the largest congregation he had ever seen was assembled; his table was too low; and even when a chair was placed upon, the rostrum was still not sufficiently elevated for the multitudes, who surrounded him; so he mounted upon a high wall, and cried aloud, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live!" They were still as the dead; and he conceived great hope, from the profound attention with which they listened: but when he had done, he says, "they made a lane for me to walk through the huge multitude, while they stood staring at me, but no one said, where dwellest thou!"

This reception brought with it double mortification,—to the body as well as the mind. An itinerant always counted upon the hospitality of his flock, and stood, indeed in need of it. Taylor had every thing to pay for: his room, fire, and attendance cost him three shillings per week; his fare was poor in proportion to his lodging; and to keep up his credit with his landlady, he often committed the pious fraud of dressing himself as if he were going out to dinner, and after a dry walk returned home hungry. He never, in all the rest of his life, kept so many fast days. He sold his horse: this resource, however, could not maintain him long; and in the midst of his distress, a demand was made upon him by one of his

hearers which was not likely to give him a favourable opinion of the national character. This man, perceiving that Taylor was a bad singer, and frequently embarrassed by being obliged to sing the Scotch version, (because the people knew nothing of the Methodist hymns,) offered his services to act as precentor, and lead off the psalms. This did excellently well, till he brought in a bill of thirteen and fourpence for his work, which was just fourpence a time: the poor preacher paid the demand, and dismissed him and the Scotch psalms together. Taylor's perseverance was not, however, wholly lost. Some dissenters from the kirk were then building what is called in Glasgow a Kirk of Relief, for the purpose of choosing their own minister. One of the leading men had become intimate with him, and offered to secure him a majority of the voters. This was no ordinary temptation: comfort, honour, and credit, with 140*l.* a year, in exchange for hunger and contempt: but there was honour also on the other side. The preacher, though he was alone in Glasgow, belonged to a well-organised and increasing society, where he had all the encouragement of co-operation, friendship, sympathy and applause. He rejected the offer; and, before spring, he formed a regular society of about forty persons, who procured a place to meet in, and furnished it with a pulpit and seats. When they had thus housed him, they began to enquire how he was maintained; if he had an estate; or what supplies from England. He then explained to them his own circumstances,

and the manner in which the preachers were supported, by small contributions. This necessary part of the Methodist œconomy was cheerfully established among them; and, when he departed, he left a certain provision for his successor, and a flock of seventy souls. But, even in this populous city, Wesley, upon his last visit to Scotland, when his venerable age alone might have made him an object of curiosity and reasonable wonder, attracted few hearers. "The congregation," he says, "was miserably small, verifying what I had often heard before, that the Scotch dearly love the word of the Lord — on the Lord's day. If I live to come again, I will take care to spend only the Lord's day at Glasgow."

CHAPTER XXIII.

METHODISM IN IRELAND.

MELANCHOLY and anàmalous as the civil history of Ireland is, its religious history is equally mournful, and not less strange. Even at the time when it was called the Island of Saints, and men went forth from its monasteries to be the missionaries, not of monachism alone, but of literature and civilization, the mass of the people continued savage, and was something worse than heathen. They accommodated their new religion to their own propensities, with a perverted ingenuity, at once humourous and detestable, and altogether peculiar to themselves. Thus, when a child was immersed at baptism, it was customary not to dip the right arm, to the intent that he might strike a more deadly and ungracious blow therewith; and under an opinion, no doubt, that the rest of the body would not be responsible at the resurrection, for any thing which had been committed by the unbaptized hand. Thus, too, at the baptism, the father took the wolves for his gossips; and thought that by this profanation, he was forming an alliance, both for himself and the boy, with the fiercest beasts of the woods. The son of a chief was baptized in milk; water was not thought

good enough, and whiskey had not then been invented. They used to rob in the beginning of the year as a point of devotion, for the purpose of laying up a good stock of plunder against Easter; and he whose spoils enabled him to furnish the best entertainment at that time, was looked upon as the best Christian, — so they robbed in emulation of each other; and reconciling their habits to their conscience, with a hardihood beyond that of the boldest casuists, they persuaded themselves that, if robbery, murder, and rape had been sins, Providence would never put such temptations in their way; nay, that the sin would be, if they were so ungrateful as not to take advantage of a good opportunity when it was offered them.

These things would appear incredible, if they were not conformable to the spirit of Irish history, fabulous and authentic. Yet were the Irish, beyond all other people, passionately attached to the religion wherein they were so miserably ill instructed. Whether they were distinguished by this peculiar attachment to their church, when the supremacy of the Pope was acknowledged throughout Europe, cannot be known, and may, with much probability, be doubted; this is evident, that it must have acquired strength and inveteracy when it became a principle of opposition to their rulers, and was blended with their hatred of the English, who so little understood their duty and their policy as conquerors, that they neither made themselves loved, nor feared, nor respected.

Ireland is the only country in which the Reformation produced nothing but evil. Protestant Europe has been richly repaid for the long calamities of that great revolution, by the permanent blessings which it left behind; and even among those nations where the papal superstition maintained its dominion by fire and sword, an important change was effected in the lives and conduct of the Romish clergy. Ireland alone was so circumstanced as to be incapable of deriving any advantage, while it was exposed to all the evils of the change. The work of sacrilege and plunder went on there as it did in England and Scotland; but the language of the people, and their savage state, precluded all possibility of religious improvement. It was not till nearly the middle of the seventeenth century, that the Bible was translated into Irish, by means of Bishop Bedell, a man worthy to have Sir Henry Wotton for his patron, and Father Paolo Sarpi for his friend. The church property had been so scandalously plundered, that few parishes* could afford even a bare subsistence to a protestant minister, and therefore few ministers were to be found. Meantime the Romish clergy were on the alert, and they were powerfully aided by a continued supply of fellow-labourers from the seminaries established in the Spanish dominions; men who, by their temper and education, were fitted for any work in which policy might think proper to em-

* The best living in Connaught was not worth more than forty shillings a-year; and some were as low as sixteen!

ploy fanaticism. The Franciscans have made it their boast, that, at the time of the Irish massacre, there appeared among the rebels more than six hundred Friars Minorite, who had been instigating them to that accursed rebellion while living among them in disguise.

Charles II. restored to the Irish church all the impropriations and portions of tithes which had been vested in the crown; removing, by this wise and meritorious measure, one cause of its inefficiency. When, in the succeeding reign, the civil liberties of England were preserved by the Church of England, the burthen of the Revolution again fell upon Ireland. That unhappy country became the seat of war, and, from that time, the Irish Catholics stood, as a political party, in the same relation to the French as they had done during Elizabeth's reign to the Spaniards. The history of Ireland is little else but a history of crimes and of misgovernment. A system of half persecution was pursued, at once odious for its injustice, and contemptible for its inefficacy. Good principles, and generous feelings, were thereby provoked into an alliance with superstition and priestcraft; and the priests, whom the law recognized only for the purpose of punishing them if they discharged the forms of their office, established a more absolute dominion over the minds of the Irish people, than was possessed by the clergy in any other part of the world.

Half a century of peace and comparative tranquillity, during which great advances were made

in trade, produced little or no melioration in the religious state of the country. Sectarians of every kind, descript and non-descript, had been introduced in Cromwell's time; and what proselytes they obtained were won from the established Church, not from the Catholics, whom both the Dissenters and the clergy seem to have considered as inconvertible. In truth, the higher orders were armed against all conviction by family pride, and old resentment, and the sense of their wrongs; while the great body of the native Irish were effectually secured by their language and their ignorance, even if the priests had been less vigilant in their duty, and the Protestants more active in theirs. Bishop Berkeley (one of the best, wisest, and greatest men whom Ireland, with all its fertility of genius, has produced) saw the evil, and perceived what ought to be the remedy. In that admirable little book, the Querist, from which, even at this day, men of all ranks, from the manufacturer to the statesman, may derive instruction, it is asked by this sagacious writer, "Whether there be an instance of a people's being converted, in a Christian sense, otherwise than by preaching to them, and instructing them in their own language? Whether catechists, in the Irish tongue, may not easily be procured and subsisted? and whether this would not be the most practicable means for converting the natives? Whether it be not of great advantage to the Church of Rome, that she hath clergy suited to all ranks of men, in gradual subordination from cardinals down to men-

dicants? Whether her numerous poor clergy are not very useful in missions, and of much influence with the people? Whether, in defect of able missionaries, persons conversant in low life, and speaking the Irish tongue, if well instructed in the first principles of religion, and in the Popish controversy, though, for the rest, on a level with the parish-clerks, or the school-masters of charity-schools, may not be fit to mix with and bring over our poor illiterate natives to the Established Church? Whether it is not to be wished that some parts of our liturgy and homilies were publicly read in the Irish language; and whether, in these views, it may not be right to breed up some of the better sort of children in the charity-schools, and qualify them for missionaries, catechists, and readers?" What Berkeley desired to see, Methodism would exactly have supplied, could it have been taken into the service of the church; and this might have been done in Ireland, had it not been for the follies and extravagances by which it had rendered itself obnoxious in England at its commencement.

Twelve years after the publication of the Querist, John Wesley landed in Dublin, where one of his preachers, by name Williams, had formed a small society. The curate of St. Mary's lent him his pulpit, and his first essay was not very promising; for he preached from it, he says, to as gay and senseless a congregation as he had ever seen. The clergyman who gave this proof of his good-will disapproved, however, of his employing lay preachers,

and of his preaching any where but in a church; and told him that the Archbishop of Dublin was resolved to suffer no such irregularities in his diocese. Wesley, therefore, called on the archbishop, and says, that, in the course of a long conversation, he answered abundance of objections; some, perhaps, he removed; and, if he did not succeed in persuading the prelate of the utility of Methodism, he must certainly have satisfied him that he was not to be prevented from pursuing his own course.

Wesley's first impressions of the Irish were very favourable; a people so generally civil, he had never seen, either in Europe or America. Even when he failed to impress them, they listened respectfully. "Mockery," said he, "is not the custom here: all attend to what is spoken in the name of God. They do not understand the making sport with sacred things; so that whether they approve or not, they behave with seriousness." He even thought that, if he or his brother could have remained a few months at Dublin, they might have formed a larger society than in London, the people in general being of a more teachable spirit than in most parts of England; but, on that very account, he observed, they must be watched over with the more care, being equally susceptible of good or ill impressions. "What a nation," he says, "is this! every man, woman, and child, except a few of the great vulgar, not only patiently, but gladly suffer the work of exhortation!" And he called them an immeasurably loving people.

There was, indeed, no cause to complain of insensibility in his hearers, as in Scotland. He excited as much curiosity and attention as he could desire; but, if Methodism had been opposed by popular outcry, and by mobs in England, it was not to be expected that it could proceed without molestation in Ireland. In Wesley's own words, "The roaring lion began to shake himself here also."

The Romish priests were the first persons to take the alarm. One of them would sometimes come, when a Methodist was preaching, and drive away his hearers like a flock of sheep. A Catholic mob broke into their room at Dublin, and destroyed every thing: several of the rioters were apprehended, but the grand jury threw out the bills against them; for there were but too many of the Protestants who thought the Methodists fair game. It happened that Cennick, preaching on Christmas-day, took for his text these words from St. Luke's Gospel: "And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." A Catholic who was present, and to whom the language of Scripture was a novelty, thought this so ludicrous, that he called the preacher a Swaddler, in derision; and this unmeaning word became the nickname of the Methodists, and had all the effect of the most opprobrious appellation. At length, when Charles Wesley was at Cork, a mob was raised against him and his followers in that city, under the guidance of one Nicholas Butler, who went about the streets dressed in a clergyman's gown and band, with a Bible in

one hand, and a bundle of ballads for sale in th other. Strange as it may appear, this blackguard relied upon the approbation and encouragement of the mayor; and when that magistrate was asked whether he gave Butler leave to beset the houses of the Methodists with a mob, and was required to put a stop to the riots, he replied, that he neither gave him leave nor hindered him: and when, with much importunity, a man, whose house was attacked, prevailed upon him to repair to the spot, and, as he supposed, afford him some protection, the mayor said aloud, in the midst of the rabble, "It is your own fault for entertaining these preachers. If you will turn them out of your house, I will engage there shall be no more harm done; but if you will not turn them out, you must take what you will get." Upon this the mob set up a huzza, and threw stones faster than before. The poor man exclaimed, "This is fine usage under a Protestant government! If I had a priest saying mass in every room of it, my house would not be touched:" to which the mayor made answer, that "the priests were tolerated, but he was not."

These riots continued many days. The mob paraded the streets, armed with swords, staves, and pistols, crying out, "Five pounds for a Swaddler's head!" Many persons, women as well as men, were bruised and wounded, to the imminent danger of their lives. Depositions of these outrages were taken and laid before the grand jury; but they threw out all the bills, and, instead of affording relief

or justice to the injured persons, preferred bills against Charles Wesley, and nine of the Methodists, as persons of ill-fame, vagabonds, and common disturbers of His Majesty's peace, praying that they might be transported. Butler was now in high glory, and declared that he had full liberty to do whatever he would, even to murder, if he pleased. The prejudice against the Methodists must have been very general, as well as strong, before a Protestant magistrate, and a Protestant grand jury in Ireland, would thus abet a Catholic rabble in their excesses; especially when the Romans, as they called themselves, designated the Methodists as often by the title of heretic dogs, as by any less comprehensive appellation. The cause must be found partly in the doctrines of the Methodists, and partly in their conduct. Their notions of perfection and assurance might well seem fanatical, in the highest degree, if brought forward, as they mostly were, by ignorant and ardent men, who were not, like the Wesleys, careful to explain and qualify the rash and indefensible expressions. The watch-nights gave reasonable ground for scandal; and the zeal of the preachers was not tempered with discretion, or softened by humanity. One of them asked a young woman, whether she had a mind to go to hell with her father; and Mr. Wesley himself, in a letter upon the proceedings at Cork, justified this * brutality so

* This person, whose name was Jonathan Reeves, only acted upon a principle which had been established at the third Conference. The following part of the minutes upon that subject is characteristic:—

far as to declare, that, unless he knew the circumstances of the case, he could not say whether it was right or wrong!

Several of the persons, whom the grand jury had presented as vagabonds, appeared at the next assizes. Butler was the first witness against them. Upon being asked what his calling might be, he replied, "I sing ballads." Upon which the judge lifted up his hands, and said, "Here are six gentlemen indicted as vagabonds, and the first accuser is a vagabond by profession!" The next witness, in reply to the same question, replied, "I am an

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Q. 1. Can an unbeliever (whatever he be in other respects) challenge any thing of God's justice?

A. Absolutely nothing but hell. And this is a point which we cannot too much insist on.

Q. 2. Do we empty men of their own righteousness, as we did at first? Do we sufficiently labour, when they begin to be convinced of sin, to take away all they lean upon? Should we not then endeavour, with all our might, to overturn their false foundations?

A. This was at first one of our principal points; and it ought to be so still; for, till all other foundations are overturned, they cannot build upon Christ.

Q. 3. Did we not *then* purposely throw them into convictions; into strong sorrow and fear? Nay, did we not strive to make them inconsolable; refusing to be comforted?

A. We did; and so we should do still; for, the stronger the conviction, the speedier is the deliverance: and none so soon receive the peace of God as those who steadily refuse all other comfort.

Q. 4. Let us consider a particular case. Were you, Jonathan Reeves, before you received the peace of God, convinced that, notwithstanding all you did, or could do, you were in a state of damnation?

J. R. I was convinced of it as fully as that I am now alive.

Q. 5. Are you sure that conviction was from God?

J. R. I can have no doubt but that it was.

Q. 6. What do you mean by a state of damnation?

J. R. A state wherein if a man dies he perisheth for ever.

Anti-swaddler, my lord;" and the examination ended in his being ordered out of court for contempt. The judge delivered such an opinion as became him upon the encouragement which had been given to the rioters. In the ensuing year Wesley himself visited Cork, and preached in a place called Hammond's Marsh, to a numerous but quiet assembly. As there was a report that the mayor intended to prevent him from preaching at that place again, Wesley, with more deference to authority than he had shown in England, desired two of his friends to wait upon him, and say, that if his preaching there would be offensive, he would give up the intention. The mayor did not receive this concession graciously: he replied, in anger, that there were churches and meetings enough; he would have no more mobs and riots — no more preaching; and if Mr. Wesley attempted to preach, he was prepared for him. Some person had said, in reply to one who observed that the Methodists were tolerated by the king, they should find that the mayor was king of Cork; and Mr. Wesley now found, that there was more meaning in this than he had been disposed to allow. When next he began preaching in the Methodist room, the mayor sent the drummers to drum before the door. A great mob was by this means collected, and when Wesley came out of the house, they closed him in. He appealed to one of the serjeants to protect him; but the man replied, he had no orders to do so; and the rabble began to pelt him: by pushing on, however, and

looking them fairly in the face, with his wonted composure, he made way, and they opened to let him pass. But a cry was set up, Hey for the Romans! the congregation did not escape so well as the leader; many of them were roughly handled, and covered with mud; the house was presently gutted, the floors were torn up, and, with the window-frames and doors, carried into the street and burnt: and the next day the mob made a grand procession, and burnt Mr. Wesley in effigy. The house was a second time attacked, and the boards demolished, which had been nailed against the windows; and a fellow posted up a notice at the public exchange, with his name affixed, that he was ready to head any mob, in order to pull down any house that should harbour a Swaddler.

The press also was employed against the Methodists, but with little judgement and less honesty. One writer accused Mr. Wesley of "robbing and plundering the poor; so as to leave them neither bread to eat, nor raiment to put on." He replied victoriously to this accusation: "A heavy charge," said he, "but without all colour of truth; yea, just the reverse is true. Abundance of those in Cork, Bandon, Limerick, and Dublin, as well as in all parts of England, who, a few years ago, either through sloth or profaneness, had not bread to eat, or raiment to put on, have now, by means of the preachers called Methodists, a sufficiency of both. Since by hearing these, they have learned to fear God, they have learned also to work with their hands, as well as to cut off every needless expence,

and to be good stewards of the mammon of unrighteousness." He averred also, that the effect of his preaching had reconciled disaffected persons to the government; and that they who became Methodists were, at the same time, made loyal subjects. He reminded his antagonists, that when one of the English bishops had been asked what could be done to stop these new preachers, the prelate had replied, "If they preach contrary to Scripture, confute them by Scripture; if contrary to reason, confute them by reason. But beware you use no other weapons than these, either in opposing error, or defending the truth." He complained that, instead of fair and honourable argument, he had been assailed at Cork with gross falsehoods, mean abuse, and base scurrility. He challenged any of his antagonists, or any who would come forward, to meet him on even ground, writing as a gentleman to a gentleman, a scholar to a scholar, a clergyman to a clergyman. "Let them," said he, "thus shew me wherein I have preached or written amiss, and I will stand reproved before all the world; but let them not continue to put persecution in the place of reason: either *private persecution*, stirring up husbands to threaten or beat their wives, parents their children, masters their servants; gentlemen to ruin their tenants, labourers, or tradesmen, by turning them out of their favour or cottages; employing, or buying of them no more, because they worship God according to their own conscience: or *open*, bare-faced, noon-day *Cork persecution*, breaking

open the houses of His Majesty's Protestant subjects, destroying their goods, spoiling or tearing the very clothes from their backs; striking, bruising, wounding, murdering them in the streets; dragging them through the mire, without any regard to age or sex, not sparing even those of tender years; no, nor women, though great with child; but, with more than Pagan or Mahometan barbarity, destroying infants that were yet unborn." He insisted, truly, that this was a common cause; for, if the Methodists were not protected, what protection would any men have? what security for their goods or lives, if a mob were to be both judge, jury, and executioner? "I fear God, and honour the king," said he. "I earnestly desire to be at peace with all men. I have not, willingly, given any offence, either to the magistrates, the clergy, or any of the inhabitants of the city of Cork; neither do I desire any thing of them, but to be treated (I will not say as a clergyman, a gentleman, or a christian) with such justice and humanity as are due to a Jew, a Turk, or a Pagan."

Whitefield visited Ireland, for the first time, in the ensuing year, and found himself the safer for the late transactions. Such outrages had compelled the higher powers to interfere; and, when he arrived at Cork, the populace was in a state of due subordination. He seems to have regarded the conduct of Wesley and his lay-preachers with no favourable eye: some dreadful offences, he said, had been given; and he condemned all politics as

below the children of God; alluding, apparently, to the decided manner in which Wesley always inculcated obedience to government as one of the duties of a Christian; making it his boast, that, whoever became a Methodist, became at the same time a good subject. Though his success was not so brilliant as in Scotland, it was still sufficient to encourage and cheer him. "Providence," says he, "has wonderfully prepared my way, and overruled every thing for my greater acceptance. Every where there seems to be a stirring among the dry bones; and the trembling lamps of God's people have been supplied with fresh oil. The word ran, and was glorified." Hundreds prayed for him when he left Cork; and many of the Catholics said, that, if he would stay, they would leave their priests: but, on a second expedition to Ireland, Whitefield narrowly escaped with his life. He had been well received, and had preached once or twice, on week days, in Oxminton Green; a place which he describes as the Moorfields of Dublin. The Ormond Boys, and the Liberty Boys, (these were the current denominations of the mob-factions at that time,) generally assembled there every Sunday—to fight; and Whitefield, mindful, no doubt, of his success in a former enterprize, under like circumstances, determined to take the field on that day, relying upon the interference of the officers and soldiers, whose barracks were close by, if he should stand in need of protection. The singing, praying, and preaching went on without much interruption; only now and then a few

stones, and a few clods of dirt, were thrown. After the sermon, he prayed for success to the Prussian arms, it being in time of war. Whether this prayer offended the party-spirit of his hearers, or whether the mere fact of his being a heretic, who went about seeking to make proselytes, had excited, in the catholic part of the mob, a determined spirit of vengeance; or, whether, without any principle of hatred or personal dislike, they considered him as a bear, bull, or badger, whom they had an opportunity of tormenting, the barracks, through which he intended to return as he had come, were closed against him; and when he endeavoured to make his way across the green, the rabble assailed him. "Many attacks," says he, "have I had from Satan's children, but now you would have thought he had been permitted to have given me an effectual parting blow." Vollies of stones came from all quarters, while he reeled to and fro under the blows, till he was almost breathless, and covered with blood. A strong beaver hat, which served him for a while as a scull-cap, was knocked off at last, and he then received many blows and wounds on the head, and one large one near the temple. "I thought of Stephen," says he, "and was in great hopes that, like him, I should be dispatched, and go off, in this bloody triumph, to the immediate presence of my Master." The door of a minister's house was opened for him in time, and he staggered in, and was sheltered there, till a coach could be brought, and he was conveyed safely away.

The bitter spirit of the more ignorant Catholics was often exemplified. The itinerants were frequently told, that it would be doing both God and the church service to burn all such as them in one fire; and one of them, when he first went into the county of Kerry, was received with the threat that they would kill him, and make whistles of his bones. Another was nearly murdered by a ferocious mob, one of whom set his foot upon his face, swearing that he would tread the Holy Ghost out of him. At Kilkenny, where the Catholics were not strong enough to make a riot with much hope of success, they gnashed at Wesley with their teeth, after he had been preaching in an old bowling-green, near the Castle; and one of them cried, "Och! what is Kilkenny come to!" But it was from among the Irish Catholics that Wesley obtained one of the most interesting of his coadjutors, and one of the most efficient also during his short life.

Thomas Walsh, whom the Methodists justly reckon among their most distinguished members, was the son of a carpenter at Bally Lynn, in the county of Limerick. His parents were strong Romanists: they taught him the Lord's Prayer and the Ave Maria, in Irish, which was his mother tongue, and the hundred and thirtieth psalm in Latin: and he was taught also, that all who differ from the Church of Rome are in a state of damnation. At eight years old he went to school to learn English; and was afterwards placed with one of his brothers, who was a schoolmaster, to

learn Latin and mathematics. At nineteen he opened a school for himself. The brother, by whom he was instructed, had been intended for the priesthood: he was a man of tolerable learning, and of an enquiring mind, and seeing the errors of the Romish church, he renounced it. This occasioned frequent disputes with Thomas Walsh, who was a strict Catholic; the one alleging the traditions and canons of the church, the other appealing to the law and to the testimony. "My brother, why do you not read God's word?" the elder would say, "lay aside prejudice, and let us reason together." After many struggles between the misgivings of his mind, and the attachment to the opinions in which he had been bred up, and the thought of his parents, and shame, and the fear of man, this state of suspense became intolerable, and he prayed to God in his trouble. "All things are known to Thee," he said, in his prayer, "and Thou seest that I want to worship Thee aright! Shew me the way wherein I ought to go, nor suffer me to be deceived by men!"

He then went to his brother, determined either to convince him, or to be convinced. Some other persons of the Protestant persuasion were present: they brought a Bible, and with it Nelson's Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England; and, with these books before them, they discussed the subject till midnight. It ended in his fair and complete conversion. "I was constrained," said he, "to give place to the light of truth: it was so convincing, that I had nothing more to say; I was judged of all; and at length confessed the weak-

ness of my former reasonings, and the strength of those which were opposed to me. About one o'clock in the morning I retired to my lodging, and, according to my usual custom, went to prayer; but now only to the God of heaven. I no longer prayed to any angel or spirit; for I was deeply persuaded, that 'there is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.' Therefore I resolved no longer to suffer any man to beguile me into a voluntary humility, in worshipping either saints or angels. These latter I considered as 'ministering spirits, sent to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation.' But with regard to any worship being paid them, one of themselves said, 'See thou do it not; worship God, God only.' All my sophisms on this head were entirely overthrown by a few hours candid reading the Holy Scriptures, which were become as a lanthorn to my feet, and a lamp to my paths, directing me in the way wherein I should go." Soon afterwards he publicly abjured the errors of the Church of Rome.*

* His disposition would have made him a saint in that church, but his principles were truly catholic in the proper sense of that abused word. "I bear them witness," says he, speaking of the Romanists, "that they have a zeal for God, though not according unto knowledge. Many of them love justice, mercy, and truth; and may, notwithstanding many errors in sentiment, and therefore in practice (since, as is God's majesty, so is his mercy,) be dealt with accordingly. There have been, doubtless, and still are amongst them, some burning and shining lights; persons who (whatever their particular sentiments may be) are devoted to the service of Jesus Christ, according as their light and opportunities admit. And, in reality, whatever opinions people may hold, *they* are most approved of God, whose temper and behaviour correspond with the model of his holy word. This, however, can be

This had been a sore struggle: a more painful part of his progress was yet to come. He read the Scriptures diligently, and the works of some of the most eminent Protestant divines; his conviction was confirmed by this course of study; and, from

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no justification of general and public unscriptural tenets, such as are many of those of the Church of Rome. It may be asked, then, why did I leave their communion, since I thought so favourably of them? I answer, because I was abundantly convinced that, as a church, they have erred from the right way, and adulterated the truths of God with the inventions and traditions of men; which the Scriptures, and even celebrated writers of themselves, abundantly testify. God is my witness, that the sole motive which induced me to leave them, was an unfeigned desire to know the way of God more perfectly, in order to the salvation of my soul. For, although I then felt, and do yet feel my heart to be, as the prophet speaks, deceitful and desperately wicked with regard to God; yet I was sincere in my reformation, having, from the Holy Spirit, an earnest desire to save my soul. If it should still be asked, But could I not be saved? I answer, if I had never known the truth of the Scriptures concerning the way of salvation, nor been convinced that their principles were anti-scriptural, then I might possibly have been saved in her communion, the merciful God making allowance for my invincible ignorance. But I freely profess, that now, since God hath enlightened my mind, and given me to see the truth, as it is in Jesus, if I had still continued a member of the Church of Rome, I could not have been saved. With regard to others, I say nothing; I know that every man must bear his own burden, and give an account of himself to God. To our own Master both they and I must stand or fall for ever. But love, however, and tender compassion for their souls, constrained me to pour out a prayer to God in their behalf:—All souls are Thine, O Lord God, and Thou willest all to come to the knowledge of the truth, and be saved. For this end Thou didst give thy only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life. I beseech thee, O eternal God, shew thy tender mercies upon those poor souls who have been long deluded by the God of this world, the Pope, and his clergy. Jesus, thou lover of souls and friend of sinners, send to them thy light and thy truth, that they may lead them. Oh let thy bowels yearn over them, and call those straying sheep, now perishing for the lack of knowledge, to the light of thy word, which is able to make them wise to salvation, through faith which is in Thee."

perceiving clearly the fallacious nature and evil consequences of the doctrine of merits, as held by the Romanists, a dismal view of human nature opened upon him. His soul was not at rest: it was no longer harassed by doubts, but the peace of God was wanting. In this state of mind, he happened one evening to be passing along the main street in Limerick, when he saw a great crowd on the parade, and turning aside to know for what they were assembled, found that Robert Swindells, one of the first itinerants in Ireland, was then delivering a sermon in the open air. The preacher was earnestly enforcing the words of our Redeemer,—words which are worth more than all the volumes of philosophy: "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls! For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Walsh was precisely in that state which rendered him a fit recipient for the doctrines which he now first heard. He caught the fever of Methodism, and it went through its regular course with all the accustomed symptoms. Some weeks he remained in a miserable condition; he could find no rest, either by night or day. "When I prayed," says he, "I was troubled; when I heard a sermon, I was pierced as with darts and arrows." He could neither sleep nor eat; his body gave way under this mental suffering, and at length he took to his bed. After a while the re-action began; fear and

wretchedness gradually gave place to the love of God, and the strong desire for salvation: and the crisis was brought on at a meeting, where, he says, "the power of the Lord came down in the midst of them; the windows of heavens were opened, and the skies poured down righteousness, and his heart melted like wax before the fire." To the psychologist it may be interesting to know, by what words this state of mind was induced. It was by the exclamation of the prophet, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah; this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" a passage which, with that that follows, is in the highest strain of lyric sublimity; it might seem little likely to convey comfort to a spirit which had long been inconsolable; but its effect was like that of a spark of fire upon materials which are ready to burst into combustion. He cried aloud in the congregation; and, when the throe was past, declared that he had now found rest, and was filled with joy and peace in believing.

"And now," says he, "I felt of a truth, that faith is the substance, or subsistence, of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen. God, and the things of the invisible world, of which I had only heard before by the hearing of the ear, appeared now, in their true light, as substantial realities. Faith gave me to see a reconciled God, and an all-sufficient Saviour. The kingdom of God was within me. I drew water out of the wells of salvation. I walked and talked

with God all the day long: whatsoever I believed to be his will, I did with my whole heart. I could unfeignedly love them that hated me, and pray for them that despitefully used and persecuted me. The commandments of God were my delight: I not only rejoiced evermore, but prayed without ceasing, and in every thing gave thanks: whether I ate or drank, or whatever I did, it was in the name of the Lord Jesus, and to the glory of God." This case is the more remarkable, because the subject was of a calm and thoughtful mind, a steady and well-regulated temper, and a melancholy temperament. He had now to undergo more obloquy and ill-will than had been brought upon him by his renunciation of the errors of the Romish church. That change his relations thought was bad enough; but, to become a Methodist, was worse, and they gave him up as undone for ever. And not his relations only, nor the Romanists — "Acquaintances and neighbours," says he, "rich and poor, old and young, clergy and laity, were all against me. Some said I was an hypocrite, others that I was mad; others, judging more favourably, that I was deceived. Reformed and unreformed I found to be just alike; and that many, who spoke against the Pope and the Inquisition, were themselves, in reality, of the same disposition."

Convinced that it was his duty now to become a minister of that gospel which he had received, he offered his services to Mr. Wesley, as one who believed, and that not hastily or lightly, but after

ardent aspirations, and continued prayer and study of the Scriptures, that he was inwardly moved by the Holy Spirit to take upon himself that office. He had prepared himself, by diligent study of the Scriptures, which he read often upon his knees; and the prayer which he was accustomed to use at such times, may excite the admiration of those even in whom it shall fail to find sympathy. "Lord Jesus, I lay my soul at thy feet, to be taught and governed by Thee. Take the veil from the mystery, and shew me the truth as it is in Thyself. Be thou my sun and star, by day and by night!" Wesley told him it was hard to judge what God had called him to, till trial had been made. He encouraged him to make the trial, and desired him to preach in Irish. The command of that language gave him a great advantage. It was long ago said in Ireland, "When you plead for your life, plead in Irish." Even the poor Catholics listened willingly, when they were addressed in their mother tongue: his hearers frequently shed silent tears, and frequently sobbed aloud, and cried for mercy; and in country towns the peasantry, who, going there upon market-day, had stopt to hear the preacher, from mere wonder and curiosity, were oftentimes melted into tears, and declared that they could follow him all over the world. One, who had laid aside some money, which he intended to bequeath, for the good of his soul, to some priest or friar, offered to bequeath it to him if he would accept it. In conversation, too, and upon all the occasions which occurred in daily life,

—at inns, and upon the highway, and in the streets,—this remarkable man omitted no opportunity of giving religious exhortation to those who needed it; taking care always not to shock the prejudices of those whom he addressed, and to adapt his speech to their capacity. Points of dispute, whether they regarded the difference of churches, or of doctrines, he wisely avoided; sin, and death, and judgment, and redemption, were his themes; and upon these themes he enforced so powerfully at such times, that the beggars, to whom he frequently addressed himself in the streets, would fall on their knees, and beat their breasts, weeping, and crying for mercy.

Many calumnies were invented to counteract the effect which this zealous labourer produced wherever he went. It was spread abroad that he had been a servant boy to a Romish priest, and having stolen his master's books, had learned, by that means, to preach. But it was not from the Catholics alone that he met with opposition. He was once waylaid near the town of Rosgrea, by about fourscore men, armed with sticks, and bound by oath in a confederacy against him: they were so liberal a mob, that, provided they could reclaim him from Methodism, they appeared not to care what they made of him; and they insisted upon bringing a Romish priest, and a minister of the Church of England, to talk with him. Walsh, with great calmness, explained to them, that he contended with no man concerning opinions, nor preached against particular churches,

but against sin and wickedness in all. And he so far succeeded in mitigating their disposition toward him, that they offered to let him go, provided he would swear never again to come to Rosgrea. Walsh would rather have suffered martyrdom than have submitted to such an oath, and martyrdom was the alternative which they proposed; for they carried him into the town, where the whole rabble surrounded him, and it was determined that he should either swear, or be put into a well. The courage with which he refused to bind himself by any oath or promise, made him friends even among so strange an assembly: some cried out vehemently that he should go into the well; others took his part: in the midst of the uproar, the parish minister came up, and, by his interference, Walsh was permitted to depart. At another country town, about twenty miles from Cork, the magistrate, who was the rector of the place, declared he would commit him to prison, if he did not promise to preach no more in those parts. Walsh replied, by asking if there were no swearers, drunkards, sabbath-breakers, and the like, in those parts; adding that, if, after he should have preached there a few times, there appeared no reformation among them, he would never come there again. Not satisfied with such a proposal, the magistrate committed him to prison: but Walsh was popular in that town; the people manifested a great interest in his behalf; he preached to them from the prison-window, and it was soon thought advisable to release him. He was more cruelly handled by the Presbyterians in

the north of Ireland: the usage which he received from a mob of that persuasion, and the exertions which he made to escape from them, threw him into a fever, which confined him for some time to his bed: and he professed that, in all his journeyings, and in his intercourse among people of many or most denominations, he had met with no such treatment; no, not even from the most enraged of the Romanists themselves.

The life of Thomas Walsh might almost convince a Catholic, that saints are to be found in other communions, as well in the church of Rome. Theopathy was, in him, not merely the ruling, it was the only passion: his intellect was of no common order; but this passion, in its excess, acted like a disease upon a mind that was, by constitution, melancholy. To whatever church he had belonged, the elements of his character would have been the same: The only difference would have been in its manifestation. As a Romanist, he might have retired to a cell or an hermitage, contented with securing his own salvation, by perpetual austerity and prayer, and a course of continual self-tormenting. But he could not have been more dead to the world, nor more entirely possessed by a devotional spirit. His friends described him as appearing like one who had returned from the other world; and perhaps it was this unearthly manner which induced a Romish priest to assure his flock, that the Walsh, who had turned heretic, and went about preaching, was dead long since; and that he who preached under

that name, was the devil in his shape. It is said that he walked through the streets of London with as little attention to all things around him, as if he had been in a wilderness, unobservant of whatever would have attracted the sight of others, and as indifferent to all sounds of excitement, uproar, and exultation, as to the passing wind. He shewed the same insensibility to the influence of fine scenery and sunshine: the only natural object, of which he spoke with feeling, was the starry firmament, — for there he beheld infinity.

With all this, the zeal of this extraordinary man was such, that, as he truly said of himself, the sword was too sharp for the scabbard. At five-and-twenty he might have been taken for forty years of age; and he literally wore himself out before he attained the age of thirty, by the most unremitting and unmerciful labour, both of body and mind. His sermons were seldom less than an hour long, and they were loud as well as long. Mr. Wesley always warned his preachers against both these errors, and considered Walsh as, in in some degree, guilty of his own death, by the excessive exertion which he made at such times, notwithstanding frequent advice, and frequent resolutions, to restrain the vehemence of his spirit. He was not less intemperate in study. Wesley acknowledged him to be the best biblical scholar whom he had ever known: if he were questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or any Greek one in the New Testament, he would tell, after a pause, how often it occurred in the Bible,

and what it meant in every place. Hebrew was his favourite study: he regarded it as a language of divine origin, and therefore perfect: "O truly laudable and worthy study!" he exclaims concerning it: "O industry above all praise! whereby a man is enabled to converse with God, with holy angels, with patriarchs, and with prophets, and clearly to unfold to men the mind of God from the language of God!" And he was persuaded that he had not attained the full and familiar knowledge of it, which he believed that he possessed, without special assistance from Heaven. At this study he frequently sate up late; and his general time of rising was at four. When he was entreated to allow himself more sleep, by one who saw that he was wasting away to death, his reply was, "Should a man rob God?" His friends related things of him which would have been good evidence in a suit for canonization. Sometimes he was lost, they say, in glorious absence on his knees, with his face heavenward, and arms clasped round his breast, in such composure, that scarcely could he be perceived to breathe. His soul seemed absorbed in God; and from the serenity, and "something resembling splendour, which appeared on his countenance, and in all his gestures afterwards, it might easily be discovered what he had been about." Even in sleep, the devotional habit still predominated, and "his soul went out in groans, and sighs, and tears to God." They bear witness to his rapts and extasies, and record circumstances which they themselves believed to be proofs

of his communion with the invisible world. With all this intense devotion, the melancholy of his disposition always predominated: and though he held the doctrines of sanctification and assurance, and doubted not but that his pardon was sealed by the blood of the covenant, no man was ever more distressed in mind, nor laboured under a greater dread of death. Even when he was enforcing the vital truths of religion, with the whole force of his intellect, and with all his heart, and soul, and strength, thoughts would come across him which he considered as diabolical suggestions; and he speaks with horror of the agony which he endured in resisting them. Indeed he was thoroughly persuaded that he was an especial object of hatred to the devil. This persuasion supplied a ready solution for the nervous affections to which he was subject, and, in all likelihood, frequently produced those abhorred thoughts, which were to him a confirmation of that miserable belief. Romish superstition affords a remedy for this disease; for, if relics and images fail to avert the fit, the cilice and the scourge amuse the patient with the belief that he is adding to his stock of merits, and distress of mind is commuted for the more tolerable sense of bodily pain.

For many years Mr. Wesley kept up an interchange of preachers between England and Ireland; and when Walsh was in London, he preached in Irish at a place called Short's Garden, and in Moorfields. Many of his poor countrymen were attracted by the desire of hearing their native

tongue, and, as others also gathered round, wondering at the novelty, he addressed them afterwards in English. But, on such occasions, mere sound* and sympathy will sometimes do the work, without the aid of intelligible words. It is related in Walsh's life, that, once in Dublin, when he was preaching in Irish, among those who were affected by the discourse, there was one man "cut to the heart" though he did not understand the language. Whatever language he used, he was a powerful preacher; and contributed, more than any other man, to the diffusion of Methodism in Ireland. All circumstances were as favourable for the progress of Methodism in that country as they were adverse to it in Scotland: the inefficiency of the Established Church, the total want, not of discipline alone, but of order, and the ardour of the Irish character, of all people the most quick and lively in their affections. And as his opposition to the Calvinistic notions made Wesley unpopular among the Scotch, in Ireland he obtained a cer-

* The most extraordinary convert that ever was made, was a certain William Heazley, in the county of Antrim, a man who was deaf and dumb from his birth. By mere imitation, and the desire of being like his neighbours, he was converted, in the 25th year of his age, from a profligate life; for his delight had been in drinking, cock-fighting, and other brutal amusements. On the days when the leader of the Society was expected, he used to watch for him, and run from house to house to assemble the people; and he would appear exceedingly mortified if the leader did not address him as he did the others. This man followed the occupation of weaving linen, and occasionally shaving, which was chiefly a Sunday's work; but after his conversion, he never would shave any person on the Sabbath.

tain degree of favour, for his decided opposition to the Romish church; while he was too wise a man ever to provoke hostility, by introducing any disputatious matter in his sermons. After a few years he speaks of himself as having, he knew not how, become an honourable man there: "The scandal of the cross," says he, "is ceased, and all the kingdom, rich and poor, Papists and Protestants, behave with courtesy, nay, and seeming good-will." Perhaps he was hardly sensible how much of this was owing to the change which had imperceptibly been wrought in his own conduct, by the sobering influence of time. The ferment of his spirit had abated, and his language had become far less indiscreet; nor, indeed, had he ever, in Ireland, provoked the indignation of good men, by the extravagances which gave such just offence in England at the beginning of his career. Some of the higher clergy, therefore, approved and countenanced his labours; and it would not have been difficult, in that country, to have made the Methodists as subservient to the interests of the Established Church, as the Regulars are to the Church of Rome.

Among so susceptible a people, it might be expected that curious effects would frequently be produced by the application of so strong a stimulant. A lady wrote from Dublin to Mr. Wesley in the following remarkable words: — "Reverend Sir, the most miserable and guilty of all the human race, who knew you when she thought herself one of

the happiest, may be ashamed to write, or speak to you, in her present condition; but the desperate misery of my state makes me attempt any thing that may be a means of removing it. My request is, that you, dear Sir, and such of your happy people who meet in Band, and ever heard the name of that miserable wretch P. T., would join in fasting and prayer on a Tuesday, the day on which I was born, that the Lord would have mercy on me, and deliver me from the power of the devil, from the most uncommon blasphemies, and the expectation of hell, which I labour under, without power to pray, or hope for mercy. May be the Lord may change my state, and have mercy on me, for the sake of his people's prayer. Indeed I cannot pray for myself; and, if I could, I have no hopes of being heard. Nevertheless, He, seeing his people afflicted for me, may, on that account, deliver me from the power of the devil. Oh, what a hell have I upon earth! I would not charge God foolishly, for he has been very merciful to me; but I brought all this evil on myself by sin, and by not making a right use of his mercy. Pray continually for me; for the prayer of faith will shut and open heaven. It may be a means of my deliverance, which will be one of the greatest miracles of mercy ever known."

If Mr. Wesley received this letter in time, it cannot be doubted but that he would have complied with the request. The unhappy writer was in Swift's Hospital, and, perhaps, in consequence

of not receiving an answer to her letter, she got her mother to address a similar one to the preacher at Cork, and he appointed two Tuesdays to be observed, as she had requested, both in that city and at Limerick. There may be ground for reasonable suspicion that Methodism had caused the disease; the Cork preacher was apprised, by a brother at Dublin, of the manner in which it operated the cure. "I have to inform you of the mercy of God to Miss T. She was brought from Swift's Hospital on Sunday evening, and on Tuesday night, about ten o'clock, she was in the utmost distress. She thought she saw Christ and Satan fighting for her; and that she heard Christ say, 'I will have her!' In a moment hope sprung up in her heart; the promises of God flowed in upon her; she cried out, I am taken from hell to heaven! She now declares she could not tell whether she was in the body or out of it. She is much tempted, but in her right mind, enjoying a sense of the mercy of God. She remembers all that is past, and knows it was a punishment for her sins." As nearly twenty years elapsed before Wesley published these letters, it may be inferred that the cure was permanent.

"Are there any drunkards here?" said a preacher one day in his sermon, applying his discourse in that manner which the Methodists have found so effectual. A poor Irishman looked up, and replied, "Yes, I am one!" And the impression which he then received, enabled him to throw off his evil

habits, and become, from that day forward, a reclaimed man. The Methodists at Wexford met in a long barn, and used to fasten the door, because they were annoyed by a Catholic mob. Being thus excluded from the meeting, the mob became curious to know what was done there; and taking counsel together, they agreed that a fellow should get in and secrete himself before the congregation assembled, so that he might see all that was going on, and, at a proper time, let in his companions. The adventurer could find no better means of concealment than by getting into a sack which he found there, and lying down in a situation near the entrance. The people collected, secured the door as usual, and, as usual, began their service by singing. The mob collected also, and, growing impatient, called repeatedly upon their friend Patrick to open the door; but Pat happened to have a taste for music, and he liked the singing so well, that he thought, as he afterwards said, it would be a thousand pities to disturb it. And when the hymn was done, and the itinerant began to pray, in spite of all the vociferation of his comrades, he thought that, as he had been so well pleased with the singing, he would see how he liked the prayer; but, when the prayer proceeded, "the power of God," says the relater, "did so confound him, that he roared out with might and main; and not having power to get out of the sack, lay bawling and screaming, to the astonishment and dismay of the congregation, who probably supposed that Sa-

tan himself was in the barn. Somebody, at last, ventured to see what was in the sack; and helping him out, brought him up, confessing his sins, and crying for mercy." This is the most comical case of instantaneous conversion that ever was recorded, and yet the man is said to have been thoroughly converted.

A memorable instance of the good effects produced by Methodism was shown, in a case of shipwreck upon the Isle of Cale, off the coast of the county of Down. There were several Methodist societies in that neighbourhood, and some of the members went wrecking with the rest of the people, and others bought, or received presents of the plundered goods. As soon as John Prickard, who was at that time travelling in the Lisburn circuit, heard of this, he hastened to enquire into it, and found that all the societies, except one, had, more or less, "been partakers of the accursed thing." Upon this he preached repentance and restitution; and, with an almost broken heart, read out sixty-three members on the following Sunday, in Downpatrick; giving notice, that those who would make restitution should be restored, at a proper time, but that for those who would not, their names should be recorded in the general steward's book, with an account of their crime and obstinacy. This severity produced much of its desired effect, and removed the reproach which would otherwise have attached to the Methodists. Some persons, who did not belong to the Society, but had merely

attended as hearers, were so much affected by the exhortation and the example, that they desired to make restitution with them. The owners of the vessel empowered Prickard to allow salvage; but, with a proper degree of austerity, he refused to do this, because the people, in the first instance, had been guilty of a crime. This affair deservedly raised the character of the Methodists in those parts; and it was observed, by the gentry in the neighbourhood, that if the ministers of every other persuasion had acted as John Prickard did, most of the goods might have been saved.

"Although I had many an aching head and pained breast," says one of the itinerants, speaking of his campaigns in Ireland, "yet it was delightful to see hundreds attending to my blundering preaching, with streaming eyes, and attention still as night." "The damp, dirty, * smoky

* There is a letter of advice from Mr. Wesley to one of his Irish preachers (written in 1769), which gives a curious picture of the people for whom such advice could be needful.—"Dear brother," he says, "I shall now tell you the things which have been, more or less, upon my mind, ever since I was in the north of Ireland. If you forget them, you will be a sufferer, and so will the people; if you observe them, it will be good for both. Be steadily serious. There is no country upon earth where this is more necessary than Ireland, as you are generally encompassed with those who, with a little encouragement, would laugh or trifle from morning till night. In every town visit all you can, from house to house; but on this, and every other occasion, avoid all familiarity with women: this is deadly poison, both to *them* and to *you*. You cannot be too wary in this respect. Be active, be diligent; avoid all laziness, sloth, indolence; fly from every degree, every appearance of it, else you will never be more than half a Christian. Be cleanly: in this let the Methodists take pattern by the

cabins of Ulster," says another, "were a good trial; but what makes a double amends for all these inconveniences, to any preacher who loves the word of God, is, that our people here are in general the most zealous, lively, affectionate Christians we have in the kingdom." Wesley himself, while he shuddered at the ferocious character of Irish history, loved the people; and said, he had seen as real courtesy in their cabins, as could be found at St. James's or the Louvre. He found them more * liberal than the English Methodists,

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Quakers. Avoid all nastiness, dirt, slovenliness, both in your person, clothes, house, and all about you. Do not stink above ground!

'Let thy mind's sweetness have its operation
'Upon thy person, clothes, and habitation.'

HERBERT.

Whatever clothes you have, let them be whole: no rents, no tatters, no rags; these are a scandal to either man or woman, being another fruit of vile laziness. Mend your clothes, or I shall never expect to see you mend your lives. Let none ever see a ragged Methodist. Clean yourselves of lice: take pains in this. Do not cut off your hair; but clean it, and keep it clean. Cure yourself and your family of the itch; a spoonful of brimstone will cure you. To let this run from year to year, proves both sloth and uncleanness: away with it at once; let not the North be any longer a proverb of reproach to all the nation. Use no snuff, unless prescribed by a physician. I suppose no other nation in Europe is in such vile bondage to this silly, nasty, dirty custom, as the Irish are. Touch no dram: it is liquid fire; it is a sure, though slow, poison; it saps the very springs of life. In Ireland, above all countries in the world, I would sacredly abstain from this, because the evil is so general; and to this, and snuff, and smoky cabins, I impute the blindness which is so exceeding common throughout the nation. I particularly desire, wherever you have preaching, that there may be a Little House. Let this be got without delay. Wherever it is not, let none expect to see me."

* "The meeting-house at Athlone was built and given, with the ground on which it stood, by a single gentleman. In Cork, one person,

and he lived to see a larger society at Dublin than any in England, except that in the metropolis.

Mr. Thomas Jones, gave between three and four hundred pounds towards the preaching-house. Towards that in Dublin, Mr. Lupell gave four hundred pounds. I know no such benefactors among the Methodists in England." Journal, xvi. p. 23.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WESLEY IN MIDDLE AGE.

It is with the minds of men as with fermented liquors; they are long in ripening, in proportion to their strength. Both the Wesleys had much to work off, and the process, therefore, was of long continuance. In Charles it was perfected about middle life. His enthusiasm had spent itself, and his opinions were modified by time, as well as sobered by experience. In the forty-first year of his age, he was married by his brother, at Garth, in Brecknockshire, to Miss Sarah Gwynne. "It was a solemn day," says John, "such as became the dignity of a christian marriage." For a while he continued to itinerate, as he had been wont; but, after a few years, he became a settled man, and was contented to perform the duties and enjoy the comforts of domestic life.

John also began to think of marriage, after his brother's example, though he had published "Thoughts on a single life," wherein he advised all unmarried persons, who were able to receive it, to follow the counsel of our Lord and of St. Paul, and "remain single for the kingdom of heaven's sake." He did not, indeed, suppose that such a

precept could have been intended for the many, and assented fully to the sentence of the apostle, who pronounced the "forbidding to marry to be a doctrine of devils." Some notion, however, that the marriage state was incompatible with holiness, seems, in consequence, perhaps, of this treatise, to have obtained ground among some of his followers at one time; for it was asked, at the Conference of 1745, whether a sanctified believer could be capable of marriage. The answer was, "Why should he not?" and probably the question was asked for the purpose of thus condemning a preposterous opinion. When he himself resolved to marry, it appears that he made both his determination and his choice without the knowledge of Charles; and that Charles, when he discovered the affair, found means, for reasons which undoubtedly he must have thought sufficient, to break off the match. But John was offended, and, for a time, there was a breach of that union between them, which had never before been disturbed. It was not long before he made a second choice, and, unfortunately for himself, no one then interfered.

The treatise which he had written in recommendation of celibacy, placed him in an unfortunate situation; and, for the sake of appearances, he consulted certain religious friends, that they might advise him to follow his own inclination. His chief counsellor was Mr. Perronet, vicar of Shoreham. "Having received a full answer from Mr. Perronet," he says, "I was clearly convinced that I

ought to marry. For many years I remained single, because I believed I could be more useful in a single than in a married state; and I praised God who enabled me so to do. I now as fully believed, that, in my present circumstances, I might be more useful in a married state; into which, upon this clear conviction, and by the advice of my friends, I entered a few days after." He thought it expedient, too, to meet the single men of the Society in London, and show them "on how many accounts it was good for those who had received that gift from God, *to remain single for the kingdom of heaven's sake*, unless when a particular case might be an exception to the general rule!" To those who properly respected Mr. Wesley, this must have been a painful scene: to his blind admirers, no doubt, comic as the situation was, it was an edifying one.

The lady whom he married was a widow, by name Vizelle, with four* children, and an independent fortune; but he took care that this should be settled upon herself, and refused to have any

* One of them quitted the profession of surgery, because, he said, "it made him less sensible of human pain." Wesley says, when he relates this, "I do not know (unless it unfits us for the duties of life) that we can have too great a sensibility of human pain. Methinks I should be afraid of losing any degree of this sensibility. And I have known exceeding few persons who have carried this tenderness of spirit to excess." He appears to have mentioned the conduct of his son-in-law as to his honour; but he relates elsewhere the saying of another surgeon in a right manly spirit:—"Mr. Wesley, you know I would not hurt a fly; I would not give pain to any living thing; but, if it were necessary, I would scrape all the flesh off a man's bones, and never turn my head aside."

command over it. It was agreed also, before their marriage, that he should not preach one sermon, nor travel one mile the less on that account: "if I thought I should," said he, "as well as I love you, I would never see your face more." And in his Journal at this time he says, "I cannot understand how a Methodist preacher can answer it to God, to preach one sermon, or travel one day less, in a married than in a single state. In this respect, surely, it remaineth, that they who have wives, be as though they had none." For a little while she travelled with him; but that mode of life, and perhaps the sort of company to which, in the course of their journies, she was introduced, soon became intolerable—as it must necessarily have been to any woman who did not enter wholly into his views, and partake of his enthusiasm. But, of all women, she is said to have been the most unsuited to him. Fain would she have made him, like Marc Antony, give up all for love; and being disappointed in that hope, she tormented him in such a manner, by her outrageous jealousy, and abominable temper, that she deserves to be classed in a triad with Xantippe and the wife of Job, as one of the three bad wives. Wesley, indeed, was neither so submissive as Socrates, nor so patient as the man of Uz. He knew that he was by nature the stronger vessel, of the more worthy gender, and lord and master by law; and that the words, *honour and obey*, were in the bond. "Know me," said he, in one of his letters to her, "and know yourself. Suspect me no more, asperse me no

more, provoke me no more: do not any longer contend for mastery, for power, money, or praise; be content to be a private insignificant person, known and loved by God and me. Attempt no more to abridge me of my liberty, which I claim by the laws of God and man: leave me to be governed by God and my own conscience; then shall I govern you with gentle sway, even as Christ the church." He reminded her that she had laid to his charge things that he knew not, robbed him, betrayed his confidence, revealed his secrets, given him a thousand treacherous wounds, and made it her business so to do, under the pretence of vindicating her own character; "whereas," said he, "of what importance is your character to mankind? if you was buried just now, or, if you had never lived, what loss would it be to the cause of God?" This was very true, but not very conciliating; and there are few stomachs which could bear to have humility administered in such doses.

"God," said he, in this same letter, "has used many means to curb your stubborn will, and break the impetuosity of your temper. He has given you a dutiful, but sickly, daughter. He has taken away one of your sons; another has been a grievous cross, as the third probably will be. He has suffered you to be defrauded of much money: He has chastened you with strong pain; and still He may say, how long liftest thou up thyself against me? Are you more humble, more gentle, more patient, more placable than you was? I fear, quite the reverse: I fear your natural tempers are rather

increased than diminished. Under all these conflicts, it might be an unspeakable blessing that you have a husband who knows your temper, and can bear with it; who is still willing to forgive you all, to overlook what is past, as if it had not been, and to receive you with open arms; only not while you have a sword in your hand, with which you are continually striking at me, though you cannot hurt me. If, notwithstanding, you continue striking, what can I, what can all reasonable men think, but that either you are utterly out of your senses, or your eye is not single; that you married me only for my money; that, being disappointed, you was almost always out of humour: that this laid you open to a thousand suspicions, which, once awakened, could sleep no more. My dear Molly, let the time past suffice. If you have not (to prevent my giving it to bad women) robbed me of my substance too; if you do not blacken me, on purpose that, when this causes a breach between us, no one may believe it to be your fault; stop, and consider what you do. As yet the breach may be repaired: you have wronged me much, but not beyond forgiveness. I love you still, and am as clear from all other women as the day I was born."

Had Mrs. Wesley been capable of understanding her husband's character, she could not possibly have been jealous; but the spirit of jealousy possessed her, and drove her to the most unwarrantable actions. It is said that she frequently travelled a hundred miles, for the purpose of watching, from a window, who was in the carriage with

him when he entered a town. She searched his pockets, opened his * letters, put his letters and

* There is no allusion in Wesley's Journal to his domestic unhappiness, unless it be in Journal xi. p. 9., where, after noticing some difficulties upon the road, he says, "Between nine and ten came to Bristol. Here I met with a trial of another kind: but this also shall be for good." His letters throw some light upon this part of his history, which would not be worth elucidating, if it did not, at the same time, elucidate his character. Writing to Mrs. S. R. (Sarah Ryan, a most enthusiastic woman), he says, "Last Friday, after many severe words, my wife left me, vowing she would see me no more. As I had wrote to you the same morning, I began to reason with myself, till I almost doubted whether I had done well in writing, or whether I ought to write to you at all. After prayer, that doubt was taken away; yet I was almost sorry that I had written that morning. In the evening, while I was preaching at the chapel, she came into the chamber where I had left my clothes, searched my pockets, and found the letter there which I had finished, but had not sealed. While she read it, God broke her heart; and I afterwards found her in such a temper, as I have not seen her in for several years. She has continued in the same ever since. So I think God has given a sufficient answer with regard to our writing to each other." But he says to the same person, eight years afterwards, "It has frequently been said, and with some *appearance* of truth, that you endeavour to *monopolize* the affections of all that fall into your hands; that you destroy the nearest and dearest connexion they had before, and make them quite cool and indifferent to their most intimate friends. I do not at all speak on my own account; I set myself out of the question; but, if there be any thing of the kind with regard to other people, I should be sorry both for them and you."

There is an unction about his correspondence with this person, which must have appeared like strong confirmation to so jealous a woman as Mrs. Wesley. He says to her, "the conversing with you, either by speaking or writing, is an unspeakable blessing to me. I cannot think of you without thinking of God. Others often lead me to him; but it is, as it were, going round about: you bring me straight into his presence. You have refreshed my bowels in the Lord: (Wesley is very seldom guilty of this sort of canting and offensive language). I not only excuse, but love your simplicity; and whatever freedom you use, it will be welcome. I can hardly avoid trembling for you! upon what a pinnacle do you stand! Perhaps few persons in England have been in so dangerous a situation as you are now. I know not whether any other was ever so regarded, both by my brother and me, at the same time." He questions her, not only about her thoughts, her imaginations, and her reasonings, but even about her *dreams*. "Is there

papers into the hands of his enemies, in hopes that they might be made use of to blast his character; and sometimes laid violent hands upon him, and tore his hair. She frequently left his house, and upon his earnest entreaties, returned again; till, after having thus disquieted twenty years of his life, as far as it was possible for any domestic vexations to disquiet a man whose life was passed in loco-motion, she seized on part of his Journals, and many other papers, which were never restored, and departed, leaving word that she never intended to return. He simply states the fact in his Journal, saying, that he knew not what the cause had been; and he briefly adds, *Non eam reliqui, non dimisi, non revocabo*; I did not forsake her, I did not dismiss her, I will not recall her. Thus, summarily, was a most injudicious marriage dissolved. Mrs. Wesley lived ten years after the separation, and is described in her epitaph as a woman of exemplary piety, a tender parent, and a sincere friend; the tomb-stone says nothing of her conjugal virtues.

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no vanity or folly in your dreams! no temptation that almost overcomes you? And are you then as sensible of the presence of God, and as full of prayer, as when you are waking?" She replies to this curious interrogation, "As to my dreams, I seldom remember them; but, when I do, I find in general they are harmless." This Sarah Ryan was at one time housekeeper at the school at Kingswood. Her account of herself, which is printed in the second volume of the Arminian Magazine, is highly enthusiastic, and shows her to have been a woman of heated fancy and strong natural talents. It appears, however, incidentally, in Wesley's letter, that though she professed to have "a direct witness" of being saved from sin, she afterwards "fell from that salvation." And, in another place, he notices her "littleness of understanding."

But even if John Wesley's marriage had proved as happy in all other respects as Charles's, it would not have produced upon him the same sedative effect. Entirely as these two brothers agreed in opinions and principles, and cordially as they had acted together during so many years, there was a radical difference in their dispositions. Of Charles it has been said, by those who knew him best, that if ever there was a human being who disliked power, avoided pre-eminence, and shrunk from praise, it was he: whereas no conqueror or poet was ever more ambitious than John Wesley. Charles could forgive an injury; but never again trusted one whom he had found treacherous. John could take men a second time to his confidence, after the greatest wrongs and the basest usage: perhaps, because he had not so keen an insight into the characters of men as his brother; perhaps, because he regarded them as his instruments, and thought that all other considerations must give way to the interests of the spiritual dominion which he had acquired. It may be suspected that Charles, when he saw the mischief and the villany, as well as the follies, to which Methodism gave occasion; and when he perceived its tendency to a separation from the Church, thought that he had gone too far, and looked with sorrow to the consequences which he foresaw. John's was an aspiring and a joyous spirit, free from all regret for the past, or apprehension for the future: his anticipations were always hopeful; and, if circumstances arose contrary to his wishes, which he was unable to controul, he accommodated himself to

them, made what advantage of them he could, and insensibly learnt to expect, with complacency, as the inevitable end of his career, a schism which, at the commencement, he would have regarded with horror, as a dutiful and conscientious minister of the Church of England.

In the first Conference it was asked, "Do you not entail a schism on the Church? Is it not probable that your hearers, after your death, will be scattered into all sects and parties? or that they will form themselves into a distinct sect?" The answer was, "We are persuaded the body of our hearers will, even after our death, remain in the Church, unless they be thrust out. We believe, notwithstanding, either that they will be thrust out, or that they will leaven the whole Church. We do, and will do, all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death; but we cannot with a good conscience, neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead." Five years afterwards the assistants were charged to exhort all those who had been brought up in the church constantly to attend its service, to question them individually concerning this, to set the example themselves, and to alter every plan which interfered with it. "Is there not," it was said, "a cause for this? Are we not, unawares, by little and little, tending to a separation from the Church? Oh, remove every tendency thereto with all diligence! Let all our preachers go to

church. Let all our people go constantly. Receive the sacrament at every opportunity. Warn all against niceness in hearing, — a great and prevailing evil. Warn them likewise against despising the prayers of the Church ; against calling our Society *a Church*, or *the Church ;* against calling our preachers *ministers*, our houses *meeting-houses* (call them plain preaching-houses). Do not license them as such. The proper form of a petition to the judges is, 'A. B. desires to have his house in C. licensed for public worship.' Do not license yourself till you are constrained, and then not as a *Dissenter*, but a Methodist preacher. It is time enough when you are prosecuted to take the oaths; thereby you are licensed."

The leaven of ill-will towards the Church was introduced among the Methodists by those dissenters who joined them. Wesley saw whence it proceeded, and was prepared to resist its effect by the feelings which he had imbibed from his* father, as well as by his sense of duty. But there were other causes which increased and strengthened the tendency that had thus been given. It is likely that, when the Non-jurors disappeared as a separate party, many of them would unite with the Methodists, being a middle course between the Church and the dissenters, which required no sacrifice either of principle or of pride. Having joined

* "A thousand times," says he, "have I found my father's words true. 'You may have peace with the Dissenters, if you do not so humour them as to dispute with them. But if you do, they will *out-face*, and *out-lung* you; and, at the end, you will be where you were at the beginning.'"

them, their leaning would naturally be toward a separation from the establishment. But the main cause is to be found in the temper of the lay-preachers, who, by an easy and obvious process, were led to conclude, that they were as much authorized to exercise one part of the ministerial functions as another. They had been taught to consider, and were accustomed to represent the clergy in the most unfavourable light. Wesley sometimes reprehended this in strong terms; but, upon this point, he was not consistent: and whenever he had to justify the appointment of lay-preachers, he was apt, in self-defence, to commit the fault which, at other times, he condemned. "I am far," says he, in one of his sermons, "from desiring to aggravate the defects of my brethren, or to paint them in the strongest colours. Far be it from me to treat others as I have been treated myself; to return evil for evil, or railing for railing. But, to speak the naked truth, not with anger or contempt, as too many have done, I acknowledge that many, if not most of those that were appointed to minister in holy things, with whom it has been my lot to converse, in almost every part of England or Ireland, for forty or fifty years last past, have not been eminent either for knowledge or piety. It has been loudly affirmed, that most of those persons now in connection with me, who believe it their duty to call sinners to repentance, having been taken immediately from low trades, tailors, shoemakers, and the like, are a set of poor, stupid, illiterate men, that scarcely know

their right hand from their left; yet I cannot but say, that I would sooner cut off my right hand than suffer one of them to speak a word in any of our chapels, if I had not reasonable proof that he had more knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, more knowledge of himself, more knowledge of God, and of the things of God, than nine in ten of the clergymen I have conversed with, either at the universities or elsewhere."

The situation in which Wesley stood led him to make this comparison, and not to make it fairly. It induced him also to listen to those who argued in favour of a separation from the Church, and to sum up their reasonings, with a bias in their favour. "They who plead for it," said he, "have weighed the point long and deeply, and considered it with earnest and continued prayer. They admit, if it be lawful to abide therein, then it is not lawful to separate: but they aver it is not lawful to abide therein; for, though they allow the liturgy to be, in general, one of the most excellent of all human compositions, they yet think it both absurd and sinful to declare such an assent and consent as is required, to any merely human composition. Though they do not object to the use of forms, they dare not confine themselves to them; and, in this form, there are several things which they apprehend to be contrary to Scripture. As to the laws of the Church, if they include the canons and decretals (both which are received as such in our courts,) they think the latter are the very dregs of popery, and that many of the former (the canons

of 1603) are as grossly wicked as absurd; that the spirit which they breathe is, throughout, truly popish and anti-christian; that nothing can be more diabolical than the *ipso facto* excommunication so often denounced therein; and that the whole method of executing these canons, the process used in our spiritual courts, is too bad to be tolerated, not in a Christian, but in a Mahommedan or Pagan nation. With regard to the ministers, they doubt whether there are not many of them whom God hath not sent, inasmuch as they neither *live* the Gospel nor teach it; neither, indeed, can they, since they do not know it. They doubt the more, because these ministers themselves disclaim that inward call to the ministry, which is at least as necessary as the outward; and they are not clear whether it be lawful to attend the ministrations of those whom God has not sent to minister. They think also, that the doctrines actually taught, by a great majority of the church ministers, are not only wrong, but fundamentally so, and subversive of the whole Gospel; therefore, they doubt whether it be lawful to bid them God speed, or to have any fellowship with them. "I will freely acknowledge," he adds, "that I cannot answer these arguments to my own satisfaction. As yet," he pursued, "we have not taken one step farther than we were convinced was our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this that we have preached abroad, prayed *extempore*, formed societies, and permitted preachers who were not episcopally ordained. And were we

pushed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty, rather wholly to separate from the Church, than to give up any one of these points; therefore, if we cannot stop a separation without stopping lay-preachers, the case is clear, we cannot stop it at all. But, if we permit them, should we not do more? Should we not appoint them rather? since the bare permission puts the matter quite out of our hands, and deprives us of all our influence. In great measure, it does; therefore to appoint them is far more expedient, if it be lawful: but is it lawful for presbyters, circumstanced as we are, to appoint other ministers? This is the very point wherein we desire advice, being afraid of leaning to our own understanding."

An inclination to episcopize was evidently shown in this language; but Wesley did not yet venture upon the act, in deference, perhaps, to his brother's determined and principled opposition. Many of his preachers, however, were discontented with the rank which they held in public opinion, thinking that they were esteemed inferior to the dissenting ministers, because they did not assume so much; they, therefore, urged him to take upon himself the episcopal office and ordain them, that they might administer the ordinances; and, as he could not be persuaded to this, they charged him with inconsistency, for tolerating lay-preaching, and not lay-administering. This charge he repelled: "My principle," said he, "is this; I submit to every ordinance of man, wherever I do not

conceive there is an absolute necessity for acting contrary to it. Consistently with this I *do* tolerate lay-preaching, because I conceive there is an absolute necessity for it, inasmuch as, were it not, thousands of souls would perish everlastingly. Yet I do *not* tolerate lay-administering; because I do not conceive there is any such necessity for it, seeing it does not appear that one soul will perish for want of it." This was, of course, called persecution, by those whom his determination disappointed; and they accused him of injustice in denying them the liberty of acting according to their own conscience. They thought it quite right that they should administer the Lord's Supper, and believed it would do much good: he thought it quite wrong, and believed it would do much hurt. "I have no right over your consciences," he said, "nor you over mine; therefore, both you and I must follow our own conscience. You believe it is a duty to administer: do so, and therein follow your own conscience. I verily believe it is a sin which, consequently, I dare not *tolerate*, and herein I follow mine." And he argued, that it was no persecution to separate from his society those who practised what he believed was contrary to the will and destructive of the word of God.

It does not appear that any of his preachers withdrew from him on this account; the question was not one upon which, at that time, a discontented man could hope to divide the society; and, if they did not assent to Mr. Wesley's arguments, they acquiesced in his will. Secessions, however,

and expulsions from other causes, not unfrequently took place: and once he found it necessary to institute an examination of his preachers, because of certain scandals which had arisen. The person with whom the offence began was one James Wheatley. At first he made himself remarkable, by introducing a luscious manner of preaching, which, as it was new among the Methodists, and at once stimulant and flattering, soon became popular, and obtained imitators. They who adopted it assumed to themselves the appellation of Gospel preachers, and called their brethren, in contempt, legalists, legal wretches, and doctors in divinity. Wesley presently perceived the mischief that was done by these men, whose secret was, to speak much of the promises, and little of the commands. "They corrupt their hearers," said he: "they feed them with sweetmeats, till the genuine wine of the kingdom seems quite insipid to them. They give them cordial upon cordial, which makes them all life and spirits for the present; but, meantime their appetite is destroyed, so that they can neither retain nor digest the pure milk of the word. As soon as that flow of spirits goes off, they are without life, without power, without any strength or vigour of soul; and it is extremely difficult to recover them, because they still cry out cordials! cordials! of which they have had too much already, and have no taste for the food which is convenient for them. Nay, they have an utter aversion to it, and this confirmed by principle, having been taught to call it husks, if not poison.

How much more to those bitters, which are previously needful to restore their decayed appetite!"

Wheatley was a quack in physic as well as in divinity, and he was soon detected in fouler practices. Complaint being at length made of his infamous licentiousness, the two brothers enquired into it, and obtained complete proof of his guilt. Upon this they delivered into his hands a written sentence of suspension in these terms: "Because you have wrought folly in Israel, grieved the Holy Spirit of God, betrayed your own soul into temptation and sin, and the souls of many others whom you ought, even at the peril of your own life, to have guarded against all sin; because you have given occasion to the enemies of God, wherever they shall know these things, to blaspheme the ways and truth of God; we can in no wise receive you as a fellow labourer, till we see clear proofs of your real and deep repentance: the least and lowest proof of such repentance which we can receive is this,—that, till our next Conference, you abstain both from preaching and from practising physic. If you do not, we are clear: we cannot answer for the consequences." They were not aware at the time of the extent of this hypocrite's criminality; but enough was soon discovered to make it necessary for them to disclaim him by public advertisements. The matter became so notorious at Norwich, that the affidavits of the women whom he had endeavoured to corrupt, were printed and hawked about the streets. The people were ready to tear him to pieces, as he deserved; and

the cry against the Methodists was such, in consequence, that Charles Wesley said Satan, or his apostles, could not have done more to shut the door against the Gospel in that place for ever.

This was a case of individual villainy, and produced no other injury to Methodism than an immediate scandal, which was soon blown over. But it is the nature of mental, as well as of corporeal diseases, to propagate themselves, and schism is one of the most prolific of all errors. One separation had already taken place between the Methodists and the Moravians, — the Calvinistic question had made a second. A minor schism was now made, by a certain James Relly, who having commenced his career under the patronage of Whitefield, ended in forming a heresy of his own, which had the merit, at least, of being a humaner scheme than that of his master, however untenable in other respects. Shocked at the intolerable notion of reprobation, and yet desirous of holding the tenet of election, he fancied that sin was to be considered as a disease, for which the death of our Redeemer was the remedy; and that, as evil had been introduced into human nature by the first Adam, who was of the earth, earthly, so must it be expelled by the second, who is from heaven, and therefore heavenly. Pursuing this notion, he taught that Christ, as a Mediator, was united to mankind, and, by his obedience and sufferings, had as fully restored the whole human race to the divine favour, as if all had obeyed or suffered in their own persons. So he preached a finished sal-

vation, which included the final restitution of all fallen intelligences. Sin being only * a disease, could not deserve punishment: it was in itself, and in its consequences, a sufficient evil; for, while it existed, darkness and unbelief accompanied it, and occasioned a privation of that happiness which the Almighty designed for all his creatures; but, in the end, all would be delivered, and the elect were only chosen to be the first fruits, — the pledges and earnest of the general harvest. Relly had, for his co-adjutor, one William Cudworth, of whom Wesley observed, after an interview with him, "that his opinions were all his own, quite new, and his phrases as new as his opinions: that all these opinions, yea, and phrases too, he affirmed to be necessary to salvation; maintaining, that all who did not receive them worshipped another God; and that he was as incapable as a brute beast of being convinced, even in the smallest point." On another occasion he remarks, that Cudworth, Relly, and their associates abhorred him as much as they did the pope, and ten times more than they did the devil. The devil, indeed, was no object of abhorrence with them: like Uncle Toby they were sorry for him; and, like Origen, they expected his reformation. They formed a sect which continues to exist in America, as well as in England, by the name of the Rellyan Universalists; and, it is said, that

* James Relly should have read an old treatise upon the Sinfulness of Sin, which, notwithstanding its odd title, is the work of a sound and powerful intellect. If I remember rightly, it is by Bishop Reynolds.

Washington's chaplain was a preacher of this denomination.

The tendency of these opinions was to an easy and quiet latitudinarianism. Antinomianism, with which they were connected, was far more mischievous, when combined with enthusiasm, — and this was the evil to which Methodism always perilously inclined. There is in the antinomian scheme, and indeed, in all predestinarian schemes, an audacity which is congenial to certain minds. They feel a pride in daring to profess doctrines which are so revolting to the common sense and feelings of mankind. Minds of a similar temper, but in a far worse state, maintain the notion of the necessity * of human actions, but reject a first cause. It is from a like effrontery of spirit that this last and worst corruption proceeds; and, as the causes are alike, so also the practical consequences of antinomianism and atheism would be the same, if men were always as bad as their opinions; for the professors of both have emancipated themselves from any other restraint than what may be imposed by the fear of human laws.

Wesley was mistaken in supposing the doctrine, that there is no sin in believers, was never heard of till the time of Count Zinzendorff. It is as old in England as the † Reformation, and

* Archbishop Sancroft says well of the fatalist: "he uses necessity as the old philosophers did an occult quality, though to a different purpose: *that* was their refuge for ignorance; *this* is his sanctuary for sin."

† Burnet speaks of certain "corrupt Gospellers, who thought, if they magnified Christ much, and depended on his merits and inter-

might undoubtedly be traced in many an early heresy. The Moravians had the rare merit of sometimes acknowledging their errors, and correcting them; on this point, they modified their language till it became reasonable; but the Methodists had caught the error, and did not so easily rid themselves of it. "God thrust us out," says Wesley, speaking of himself and his brother, "utterly against our will, to raise a holy people. When Satan could no otherwise prevent this, he threw Calvinism in our way, and then* Antinomianism, which struck at the root both of inward and outward holiness." He acknowledged that they had, unawares, leaned too much toward both; and that the truth of the Gospel lies within a hair's breadth of them: "So," said he, "that it is altogether foolish and sinful, because we do not quite agree either with one or the other, to run

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cession, they could not perish, which way soever they led their lives. And special care was taken in the Homilies to rectify this error."

* This pernicious doctrine was well explained in the first Conference: "Q. What is Antinomianism?

A. The doctrine which makes void the law through faith.

Q. What are the main pillars thereof?

A. 1. That Christ abolished the moral law:

2. That therefore Christians are not obliged to observe it;

3. That one branch of Christian liberty is liberty from obeying the commandments of God:

4. That it is bondage to do a thing, because it is commanded; or forbear it, because it is forbidden:

5. That a believer is not *obliged* to use the ordinances of God, or to do good works:

6. That a preacher ought not to exhort to good works; not unbelievers, because it is hurtful; not believers, because it is useless."

from them as far as ever we can." The question, "Wherein may we come to the very edge of Calvinism?" was proposed in the second Conference; and the answer was, "In ascribing all good to the free-grace of God; in denying all natural free-will and all power antecedent to grace; and in excluding all merit from man, even for what he has or does by the grace of God." This was endeavouring to split the hair. "Wherein may we come to the edge of Antinomianism?" was asked likewise; and the answer was less objectionable, "In exalting the merits and love of Christ; in rejoicing evermore."

In endeavouring to approach the edge of this perilous notion, Wesley went sometimes too near. But his general opinion could not be mistaken; and when any of his followers fell into the error, he contended against it zealously. It was a greater hindrance, he said, to the word of God, than any, or all others put together: and he sometimes complains, that most of the seed which had been sown during so many years, had been rooted up and destroyed by "the wild boars, the fierce, unclean, brutish, blasphemous * Antinomians." From

* The annexed extract from Wesley's Journal will show that this language is not too strong: "I came to Wensbury. The Antinomian teachers had laboured hard to destroy this poor people. I talked an hour with the chief of them, Stephen Timmins. I was in doubt whether pride had not made him mad. An uncommon wildness and fierceness in his air, his words, and the whole manner of his behaviour, almost induced me to think God had, for a season, given him up into the hands of Satan. In the evening I preached at Birmingham. Here another of their pillars, J—— W——, came to me, and looking over his shoulder, said, 'Don't think I want to be in your society;

this reproach, indeed, which attaches to many of his Calvinistic opponents, he was entirely clear, and the great body of his society has continued so. But his disposition to believe in miraculous manifestations of divine favours, led him sometimes to encourage an enthusiasm which impeached his own judgment, and brought a scandal upon Methodism.

Among the converts to Methodism at this time were Mr. Berridge, vicar of Everton, in Bedfordshire, and Mr. Hickes, vicar of Wrestlingworth, in the same neighbourhood. These persons, by their preaching, produced the same contagious convulsions in their hearers, as had formerly prevailed at Bristol; and though time had sobered Mr. Wesley's feelings, and matured his judgment, he was so far deceived, that he recorded the things which occurred, not as psychological, but as religious cases. They were of the most frightful and

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but if you are free to speak to me, you may.' I will set down the conversation, dreadful as it was, in the very manner wherein it passed, that every serious person may see the true picture of Antinomianism full grown; and may know what these men mean by their favourite phrase of being *perfect* in Christ, not in themselves. 'Do you believe you have nothing to do with the law of God?' 'I have not. I am not under the law. I live by faith.'—'Have you, as living by faith, a right to every thing in the world?' 'I have. All is mine, since Christ is mine.'—'May you then take any thing you will, any where? Suppose, out of a shop, without the consent or knowledge of the owner?' 'I may, if I want it; for it is mine; only I will not give offence.'—'Have you also a right to all the women in the world?' 'Yes, if they consent.'—'And is not that a sin?' 'Yes, to him that thinks it a sin; but not to those whose hearts are free.' The same thing that wretch, Roger Ball, affirmed in Dublin. Surely these are the first-born children of Satan!"

extraordinary kind. An eye-witness described the church at Everton as crowded with persons from all the country round; "the windows," he says, "being filled, within and without, and even the outside of the pulpit, to the very top, so that Mr. Berridge seemed almost stifled with their breath; yet," the relator continues, "feeble and sickly as he is, he was continually strengthened, and his voice, for the most part, distinguishable in the midst of all the outcries. When the power of religion begun to be spoke of, the presence of God really filled the place; and while poor sinners felt the sentence of death in their souls, what sounds of distress did I hear! The greatest number of them who cried, or fell, were men; but some women, and several children, felt the power of the same Almighty Spirit, and seemed just sinking into hell. This occasioned a mixture of various sounds; some shrieking, some roaring aloud. The most general was a loud breathing, like that of people half-strangled, and gasping for life; and, indeed, almost all the cries were like those of human creatures dying in bitter anguish. Great numbers wept without any noise; others fell down as dead; some sinking in silence, some with extreme noise and violent agitation. I stood on the pew seat, as did a young man in the opposite pew, an able-bodied, fresh, healthy countryman; but, in a moment, while he seemed to think of nothing less, down he dropt, with a violence inconceivable. The adjoining pews seemed shook with his fall: I heard afterwards the stamping of his feet,

ready to break the boards, as he lay in strong convulsions at the bottom of the pew. When he fell, Mr. B——ll and I felt our souls thrilled with a momentary dread; as, when one man is killed by a cannon-ball, another often feels the wind of it. Among the children who felt the arrows of the Almighty, I saw a sturdy boy, about eight years old, who roared above his fellows, and seemed, in his agony, to struggle with the strength of a grown man. His face was red as scarlet; and almost all on whom God laid his hand, turned either very red, or almost black."

The congregation adjourned to Mr. Berridge's house, whither those who were still in the fit were carried: the maddened people were eager for more stimulants, and the insane vicar was as willing to administer more, as they were to receive it. "I stayed in the next room," says the relator, "and saw a girl, whom I had observed peculiarly distressed in the church, lying on the floor as one dead, but without any ghastliness in her face. In a few minutes we were informed of a woman filled with peace and joy, who was crying out just before. She had come thirteen miles, and is the same person who dreamed Mr. Berridge would come to his village on that very day whereon he did come, though without either knowing the place or the way to it. She was convinced at that time. Just as we heard of her deliverance, the girl on the floor began to stir. She was then set in a chair, and, after sighing a while, suddenly rose up, rejoicing in God. Her face was covered with

the most beautiful smile I ever saw. She frequently fell on her knees, but was generally running to and fro, speaking these and the like words: "Oh, what can Jesus do for lost sinners! He has forgiven all my sins! I am in Heaven! I am in Heaven! Oh, how he loves me, and how I love him!" Meantime I saw a thin pale girl, weeping with sorrow for herself, and joy for her companion. Quickly the smiles of Heaven came likewise on her, and her praises joined with those of the other. I also then laughed with extreme joy; so did Mr. B——ll, who said it was more than he could well bear; so did all who knew the Lord, and some of those who were waiting for salvation, till the cries of them who were struck with the arrows of conviction, were almost lost in the sounds of joy.—Mr. Berridge about this time retired; we continued, praising God with all our might, and his work went on. I had for some time observed a young woman all in tears, but now her countenance changed: the unspeakable joy appeared in her face, which, quick as lightning, was filled with smiles, and became a crimson colour. About the same time John Keeling, of Potton, fell into an agony; but he grew calm in about a quarter of an hour, though without a clear sense of pardon. Immediately after, a stranger, well dressed, who stood facing me, fell backward to the wall, then forward on his knees, wringing his hands, and roaring like a bull. His face at first turned quite red, then almost black. He rose and ran against the wall, till Mr. Keeling and another

held him. He screamed out, 'Oh, what shall I do! what shall I do! Oh, for one drop of the blood of Christ!' As he spoke, God set his soul at liberty: he knew his sins were blotted out; and the rapture he was in seemed too great for human nature to bear. He had come forty miles to hear Mr. Berridge.

"I observed, about the time that Mr. Coe (that was his name) began to rejoice, a girl eleven or twelve years old, exceedingly poorly dressed, who appeared to be as deeply wounded, and as desirous of salvation, as any. But I lost sight of her, till I heard the joyful sound of another born in Sion, and found, upon enquiry, it was her, the poor, disconsolate, gipsey-looking child. And how did I see such a sight as I do not expect again on this side eternity. The faces of the three justified children, and, I think, of all the believers present, did really shine; and such a beauty, such a look of extreme happiness, and, at the same time, of divine love and simplicity, did I never see in human faces till now. The newly justified eagerly embraced one another, weeping on each other's necks for joy, and besought both men and women to help them in praising God." The same fits were produced by Mr. Hickes's preaching at Wrestlingworth, whither this relator proceeded; and there also the poor creatures, who were under the paroxysm, were carried into the parsonage, where some lay as if they were dead, and others lay struggling. In both churches several pews and benches were broken by the violent struggling of

the sufferers; "yet," says the narrator, "it is common for people to remain unaffected there, and afterward drop down in their way home. Some have been found lying as dead in the road; others in Mr. Berridge's garden, not being able to walk from the church to his house, though it is not two hundred yards." The person who thus minutely described the progress of this powerful contagion, observes, that few old people experienced any thing of what he called the work of God, and scarce any of the rich; and, with that uncharitable spirit, which is one of the surest and worst effects of such superstition, he remarks, that three farmers, in three several villages, who set themselves to oppose it, all died within a month.

Such success made Berridge glorious in his own eyes, as well as in those of all the fanatics round about. He travelled about the country, making Everton still the centre of his excursions; and he confesses that, on one occasion, when he mounted a table upon a common near Cambridge, and saw nearly ten thousand people assembled, and many gownsmen among them, he paused after he had given out his text, thinking of "something pretty to set off with; but," says he, "the Lord so confounded me, (as indeed it was meet, for I was seeking not his glory, but my own,) that I was in a perfect labyrinth, and found that, if I did not begin immediately, I must go down without speaking; so I broke out with the first word that occurred, not knowing whether I should be able to add any more. Then the Lord opened my mouth,

enabling me to speak near an hour, without any kind of perplexity, and so loud, that every one might hear." For a season this man produced a more violent influenza of fanaticism, than had ever followed upon either Whitefield's or Wesley's preaching. The people flocked to hear him in such numbers, that his church could not contain them, and they adjourned into a field. "Some of them," says an eye-witness, "who were here pricked to the heart, were affected in an astonishing manner. The first man I saw wounded would have dropped, but others, catching him in their arms, did indeed prop him up; but were so far from keeping him still, that he caused all of them to totter and tremble. His own shaking exceeded that of a cloth in the wind. It seemed as if the Lord came upon him like a giant, taking him by the neck, and shaking all his bones in pieces. One woman tore up the ground with her hands, filling them with dust, and with the hard-trodden grass, on which I saw her lie with her hands clinched, as one dead, when the multitude dispersed: another roared and screamed in a more dreadful agony than ever I heard before. I omit the rejoicing of believers, because of their number, and the frequency thereof; though the manner was strange, some of them being quite overpowered with divine love, and only showing enough of natural life to let us know they were overwhelmed with joy and life eternal. Some continued long as if they were dead, but with a calm sweetness in their looks. I saw one who lay two or three hours in the open

air, and being then carried into the house, continued insensible another hour, as if actually dead. The first sign of life she showed was a rapture of praise, intermixed with a small joyous laughter." It may excite astonishment in other countries, and reasonable regret in this, that there should be no authority capable of restraining extravagancies and indecencies like these.

Berridge had been curate of Stapleford, near Cambridge, several years, and now, after what he called his conversion, his heart was set upon preaching a "gospel-sermon" there, which, he said, he had never done before. Some fifteen hundred persons assembled in a field to hear him. The contagion soon began to show itself among those who were pre-disposed for it: others, of a different temper, mocked and mimicked these poor creatures in their convulsions; and some persons, who were in a better state of mind than either, indignant at the extravagance and indecency of the scene, called aloud to have those wretches horse-whipped out of the field. "Well (says the fanatical writer) may Satan be enraged at the cries of the people, and the prayers they make in the bitterness of their souls, seeing we know these are the chief times at which Satan is cast out."—"I heard a dreadful noise, on the farther side of the congregation (says this writer), and turning thither, saw one Thomas Skinner coming forward, the most horrible human figure I ever saw. His large wig and hair were coal-black; his face distorted beyond all description. He roared incessantly,

throwing and clapping his hands together with his whole force. Several were terrified, and hastened out of his way. I was glad to hear him, after a while, pray aloud. Not a few of the triflers grew serious, while his kindred and acquaintance were very unwilling to believe even their own eyes and ears. They would fain have got him away; but he fell to the earth, crying, 'My burden! my burden!' I cannot bear it!' Some of his brother scoffers were calling for horsewhips, till they saw him extended on his back at full length: they then said he was dead; and indeed the only sign of life was the working of his breast, and the distortions of his face, while the veins of his neck were swelled as if ready to burst. He was, just before, the chief captain of Satan's forces: none was by nature more fitted for mockery; none could swear more heroically to whip out of the close all who were affected by the preaching."—Berridge bade the people take warning by him, while he lay roaring and tormented on the ground. "His agonies lasted some hours; then his body and soul were eased."

It is to be regretted that, of the many persons who have gone through this disease, no one should have recorded his case who was capable of describing his sensations accurately, if not of analyzing them. Berridge and Hickes are said to have "awakened" about four thousand souls in the course of twelve months. Imposture in all degrees, from the first natural exaggeration to downright fraud, kept pace with enthusiasm. A child,

seven years old, saw visions, and "astonished the neighbours with her innocent awful manner of relating them." A young man, whose mother affirmed that he had had fits, once a-day at least, for the last two years, began to pray in those fits; protesting afterwards, that he knew not a word of what he had spoken, but was as ignorant of the matter as if he had been dead all the while. This impostor, when he was about to exhibit, stiffened himself like a statue; "his very neck seemed made of iron." After he had finished, his body grew flexible by degrees, but seemed to be convulsed from head to foot; and when he thought proper to recover, he said, "he was quite resigned to the will of God, who gave him such strength in the inner man, that he did not find it grievous, neither could ask to be delivered from it."—"I discoursed," says the credulous relater of these things, "with Anne Thorn, who told me of much heaviness following the visions with which she had been favoured; but said she was, at intervals, visited still with so much overpowering love and joy, especially at the Lord's supper, that she often lay in a trance for many hours. She is twenty-one years old. We were soon after called into the garden, where Patty Jenkins, one of the same age, was so overwhelmed with the love of God, that she sunk down, and appeared as one in a pleasant sleep, only with her eyes open. Yet she had often just strength to utter, with a low voice, ejaculations of joy and praise; but no words coming up to what she felt, she frequently laughed while she

saw his glory. This is quite unintelligible to many, for a stranger intermeddleth not with our joy. So it was to Mr. M. who doubted whether God or the devil had filled her with love and praise. Oh, the depth of human wisdom! Mr. R., in the mean time, was filled with a solemn awe. I no sooner sate down by her, than the Spirit of God poured the same blessedness into my soul."

Whether this were folly or fraud, the consequences that were likely to result did not escape the apprehension of persons who, though themselves affected strongly by the disease, still retained some command of reason. They began to doubt whether such trances were not the work of Satan; with the majority, however, they passed for effects of grace. Wesley, who believed and recorded them as such, enquired of the patients, when he came to Everton, concerning their state of feeling in these trances. The persons, who appear to have been all young women and girls, agreed, "that when they *went away*, as they termed it, it was always at the time they were fullest of the love of God: that it came upon them in a moment, without any previous notice, and took away all their senses and strength: that there were some exceptions, but, generally, from that moment they were in another world, knowing nothing of what was done or said by all that were round about them." He had now an opportunity of observing a case. Some persons were singing hymns in Berridge's house, about five in the afternoon, and presently Wesley was summoned by Berridge himself, with

information that one of them, a girl of fifteen, was fallen into a trance. "I went down immediately," says Mr. Wesley, "and found her sitting on a stool, and leaning against the wall, with her eyes open and fixed upward. I made a motion, as if going to strike; but they continued immoveable. Her face shewed an unspeakable mixture of reverence and love, while silent tears stole down her cheek. Her lips were a little open, and sometimes moved, but not enough to cause any sound. I do not know whether I ever saw a human face look so beautiful. Sometimes it was covered with a smile, as from joy mixing with love and reverence; but the tears fell still, though not so fast. Her pulse was quite regular. In about half an hour I observed her countenance change into the form of fear, pity, and distress. Then she burst into a flood of tears, and cried out, 'Dear Lord! they *will* be damned! they *will* all be damned!' But, in about five minutes, her smiles returned, and only love and joy appeared in her face. About half an hour after six, I observed distress take place again, and soon after she wept bitterly, and cried, 'Dear Lord, they *will* go to hell! the world *will* go to hell!' Soon after she said, 'Cry aloud! spare not!' and in a few moments her look was composed again, and spoke a mixture of reverence, joy, and love. Then she said aloud, 'Give God the glory!' About seven her senses returned. I asked, 'Where have you been?'—'I have been with my Saviour.'—'In heaven, or on earth?'—'I cannot tell; but I was in glory!'—

'Why, then, did you cry?'—'Not for myself, but for the world; for I saw they were on the brink of hell.'—'Whom did you desire to give the glory to God?'—'Ministers that cry aloud to the world; else they will be proud? and then God will leave them, and they will lose their own souls.'"

With all his knowledge of the human heart, (and few persons have had such opportunities of extensive and intimate observation,) Wesley had not discovered, that when occasion is afforded for imposture of this kind, the propensity to it is a vice to which children and young persons are especially addicted. If there be any natural obliquity of mind, sufficient motives are found in the pride of deceiving their elders, and the pleasure which they feel in exercising the monkey-like instinct of imitation. This is abundantly proved by the recorded tales of witchcraft in this country, in New-England, and in Sweden; and it is from subjects like this girl, whose acting Wesley beheld with reverential credulity, instead of reasonable suspicion, that the friars have made regular-bred saints, such as Rosa of Peru, and Catharine of Sienna. With regard to the bodily effects that ensued, whenever the spiritual influenza began, there could be no doubt of their reality; but it had so much the appearance of an influenza raging for awhile, affecting those within its sphere, and then dying away, that Wesley could not be so fully satisfied concerning the divine and supernatural exciting cause, as he had been when first the disease manifested itself at Bristol, and as he still desired to be. "I

have generally observed," said he, "more or less of these outward symptoms to attend the beginning of a general work of God. So it was in New-England, Scotland, Holland, Ireland, and many parts of England; but, after a time, they gradually decrease, and the work goes on more quietly and silently. Those whom it pleases God to employ in his work, ought to be quite passive in this respect: they should choose nothing, but leave entirely to him all the circumstances of his own work."

Returning to Everton, about four months afterwards, he found "a remarkable difference as to the *manner* of the work. None now were in trances, none cried out, none fell down, or were convulsed. Only some trembled exceedingly; a low murmur was heard, and many were refreshed with the *multitude of peace*." The disease had spent itself, and the reflections which he makes upon this change, show that others had begun to suspect its real nature, and that he himself was endeavouring to quiet his own suspicions. "The danger *was*," says he, "to regard extraordinary circumstances too much,—such as outcries, convulsions, visions, trances, as if these were essential to the inward work, so that it could not go on without them. Perhaps the danger *is*, to regard them too little; to condemn them altogether; to imagine they had nothing of God in them, and were a hindrance to his work; whereas the truth is, 1. God suddenly and strongly convinced many that they were lost sinners, the *natural* conse-

quences whereof were sudden outcries, and strong bodily convulsions. 2. To strengthen and encourage them that believed, and to make his work more apparent, he favoured several of them with divine dreams; others with trances and visions. 3. In some of these instances, after a time, nature mixed with grace. 4. Satan likewise mimicked this work of God, in order to discredit the whole work; and yet it is not wise to give up *this part*, any more than to give up the whole. At first it was, doubtless, wholly from God: it is partly so at this day; and He will enable us to discern how far, in every case, the work is pure, and when it mixes or degenerates. Let us even suppose that, in some few cases, there was a mixture of dissimulation; that persons pretended to see or feel what they did not, and imitated the cries or convulsive motions of those who were really overpowered by the Spirit of God; yet even this should not make us either deny or undervalue the real work of the Spirit. The shadow is no disparagement of the substance, nor the counterfeit of the real diamond."

His tone, perhaps, was thus moderated, because, by recording former extravagancies of this kind in full triumph, he had laid himself open to attacks which he had not been able to repel. Warburton had censured these things with his strong sense and powers of indignant sarcasm; and they had been exposed still more effectually by Bishop Lavington, of Exeter, in "A Comparison between the Enthusiasm of Methodists and of Papists." Here

Wesley, who was armed and proof at other points, was vulnerable. He could advance plausible arguments, even for the least defensible of his doctrines; and for his irregularities, some that were valid and incontestable. On that score he was justified by the positive good which Methodism had done, and was doing; but here he stood convicted of a credulity discreditable to himself, and dangerous in its consequences; the whole evil of scenes so disorderly, so scandalous, and so frightful, was distinctly seen by his opponents; and perhaps they did not make a sufficient allowance for the phenomena of actual disease, and the manner in which, upon their first appearance, they were likely to affect a mind, heated as his had been at the commencement of his career. In all his other controversies, Wesley preserved that urbane and gentle tone, which arose from the genuine benignity of his disposition and manners; but he replied to Bishop Lavington with asperity; the attack had galled him; he could not but feel that his opponent stood upon the vantage ground, and, evading the main charge, he contented himself in his reply * with explaining away certain passages, which were less obnoxious than they had been made to appear, and disproving some personal

* His Journal shows that he undertook the task with no alacrity. "I began writing a letter to the Comparer of the Papists and Methodists. Heavy work; such as I should never choose; but sometimes it must be done. Well might the ancient say, 'God made practical divinity necessary; the devil, controversial.' But it is necessary. We must resist the devil, or he will not flee from us."

charges* which the Bishop had repeated upon evidence that appeared, upon enquiry, not worthy of the credit he had given to it. But Wesley's resentments were never lasting: of this a passage in his Journal, written a few years afterwards, affords a pleasing proof. Having attended service at Exeter Cathedral, he says, "I was well pleased to partake of the Lord's supper with my old opponent, Bishop Lavington. Oh may we sit down together in the kingdom of our Father!" He understood the happiness of his temper in this respect, and says of it, "I cannot but stand amazed at the goodness of God. Others are most assaulted on the weak side of their soul; but with me it is quite otherwise. If I have any strength at all, (and I have none but what I *received*,) it is in forgiving injuries; and on this very side am I assaulted more frequently than on any other. Yet leave me not here one hour to myself, or I shall betray myself and Thee!"

Warburton, though a more powerful opponent, assailed him with less effect. Wesley replied to him in a respectful tone, and met the attack fairly. He entered upon the question of Grace, maintained his own view of that subject, and repeated, in the most explicit terms, his full belief, that the course which he and his coadjutors had taken, was

* On this point it is proper to state, that he does justice to the Bishop in his Journal. For when he notices that, calling upon the person who was named as the accuser, she told him readily and repeatedly, that she "never saw or knew any harm by him," he adds, "yet I am not sure that she has not said just the contrary to others. If so, she, not I, must give account for it to God."

approved by miracles. "I have seen with my eyes," said he, "and heard with my ears, several things which, to the best of my judgement, cannot be accounted for by the ordinary course of natural causes, and which, I therefore believe, ought to be ascribed to the extraordinary interposition of God. If any man choose to call these miracles, I reclaim not. I have weighed the preceding and following circumstances; I have strove to account for them in a natural way; but could not, without doing violence to my reason." He instanced the case of John Haydon, and the manner in which he himself, by an effort of faith, had thrown off a fever. The truth of these facts, he said, was supported by the testimony of competent witnesses, in as high a degree as any reasonable man could desire: the witnesses were many in number, and could not be deceived themselves; for they saw with their own eyes, and heard with their own ears. He disclaimed for himself any part in these and the other cases, which might appear to redound to his praise: his will, or choice, or desire, he said, had no place in them; and this, he argued, had always been the case with true miracles; for God interposed his miraculous powers always according to his own sovereign will; not according to the will of man, neither of him by whom he wrought, nor of any other man whatsoever. So many such interpositions, he affirmed, had taken place, as would soon leave no excuse either for denying or despising them. "We desire no *favour*," said he, "but the *justice*, that diligent

inquiry may be made concerning them. We are ready to name the persons on whom the power was shown, which belongeth to none but God, (not one, or two, or ten or twelve only,)—to point out their places of abode; and we engage they shall answer every pertinent question fairly and directly; and, if required, shall give all their answers upon oath, before any who are empowered to receive them. It is our particular request, that the circumstances which went before, which accompanied, and which followed after the facts under consideration, may be thoroughly examined, and punctually noted down. Let but this be done, (and is it not highly needful it should, at least by those who would form an exact judgment?) and we have no fear that any reasonable man should scruple to say, "this hath God wrought."

It had never entered into Wesley's thoughts, when he thus appealed to what were called the outward signs, as certainly miraculous, that they were the manifestations of a violent and specific disease, produced by excessive excitement of the mind, communicable by sympathy, and highly contagious. We are yet far from understanding the whole power of the mind over the body; nor, perhaps, will it ever be fully understood. It was very little regarded in Wesley's time; these phenomena therefore were considered by the Methodists, and by those who beheld them, as wholly miraculous; by all other persons, as mere exhibitions of imposture. Even Charles Wesley, when he discovered that much was voluntary, had no suspicion

that the rest might be natural; and John, in all cases where any thing supernatural was pretended, was, of all men, the most credulous. In the excesses at Everton, he had, however reluctantly, perceived something which savoured of fraud; and, a few years afterward, circumstances of much greater notoriety occurred, when, from the weakness of his mind, he encouraged at first a dangerous enthusiasm, which soon broke out into open madness.

Among his lay-preachers, there was a certain George Bell, who had formerly been a life-guardsman. Mr. Wesley published, as plainly miraculous, an account of an instantaneous cure wrought by this man: it was a surgical * case, and must, there-

* "Dec. 20, 1760. I made a particular enquiry into the case of Mary Special, a young woman then in Tottenham-court Road. She said, 'Four years since, I found much pain in my breasts, and afterwards hard lumps. Four months ago my left breast broke, and kept running continually. Growing worse and worse, after some time I was recommended to St. George's Hospital. I was let blood many times, and took hemlock thrice a day; but I was no better, the pain and the lumps were the same, and both my breasts were quite hard, and black as soot: when, yesterday se'nnight, I went to Mr. Owen's, where there was a meeting for prayer. Mr. Bell saw me, and asked, Have you faith to be healed? I said, yes. He prayed for me, and, in a moment, all my pain was gone. But the next day I felt a little pain again: I clapped my hands on my breasts, and cried out Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole! It was gone; and, from that hour, I have had no pain, no soreness, no lumps or swelling, but both my breasts were perfectly well, and I have been so ever since.' "Now," says Mr. Wesley, "here are plain facts: 1. she *was* ill; 2. she *is* well; 3. she became so in a moment. Which of these can, with any modesty, be denied?" It is not a little remarkable, that, after Bell had become decidedly crazy, recovered his wits, forsaken the Methodists, and professed himself a thorough unbeliever, Mr. Wesley should still have believed this story, and have persisted in asking the same question, without suspecting any deceit in either party. The fraud lay in the woman, Bell being a thorough enthusiast at that time.

fore, either have been miracle or fraud. A judicious enquiry would have shown that Bell, who was not in a sane mind, had been a dupe in this business; but Wesley contented himself with the patient's own relation, accredited it without scruple, and recorded it in a tone of exultation. Bell was at that time crazy, and any doubt which he might have entertained of his own supernatural gifts, was removed by this apparent miracle, the truth of which was thus attested. Others who listened to him became as crazy as himself; and Wesley was persuaded that, "being full of love," they were actually "favoured with extraordinary revelations and manifestations from God. But by this very thing," says he, "Satan beguiled them from the simplicity that is in Christ. By insensible degrees, they were led to value these extraordinary gifts, more than the ordinary grace of God; and I could not convince them, that a grain of humble love was better than all these gifts put together."

In the height of George Bell's extravagance, he attempted to restore a blind man to sight, touched his eyes with spittle, and pronounced the word *Ephphatha*. The ecclesiastical authorities ought to have a power of sending such persons to Bedlam, for the sake of religion and of decency, and for the general good; but such madmen in England are suffered to go abroad, and bite whom they please with impunity. The failure of the blasphemous experiment neither undeceived him nor his believers; and they accounted for it by saying, that the patient had not faith to be healed.

Wesley had begun to suspect the sanity of these enthusiasts, because they had taken up a notion, from a text in the Revelations, that they should live for ever. As, however, one of the most enthusiastic happened to go raving mad, and die, he thought the delusion would be checked; as if a disease of the reason could be cured by the right exercise of the deceased faculty itself! Moreover, with their enthusiasm personal feelings were mixed up, of dislike towards him and his brother, arising from an impatience of their superiority; and this feeling induced Maxfield to stand forward as the leader of the innovators, though he was not the dupe of their delusions. Mr. Wesley desired the parties to meet him, that all misunderstandings might be removed. Maxfield alone refused to come. "Is this," said Wesley, "the first step towards a separation! Alas for the man, alas for the people!". It is said that no other event ever grieved him so deeply as the conduct of Maxfield; for it at once impeached his judgment, and wounded him as an act of ingratitude. Maxfield was the first person whom he had consented to hear as a lay-preacher, and the first whom he authorized to co-operate with him in that character; and so highly did he value him, that he had obtained ordination for him from the Bishop of Londonderry. This prelate was one of the clergy who encouraged Mr. Wesley in Ireland; and when he performed the ceremony, he said to Maxfield, "Sir, I ordain you to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death!"

But of all the lessons which he learnt from Wesley, it now appeared that that of insubordination was the one in which he was most perfect.

The breach, however, was not immediate: some concessions were made by Maxfield, and Wesley, after a while, addressed a letter to him and his associates, especially George Bell, telling them what he disliked in their doctrines, spirit, and outward behaviour. He objected to their teaching that man might be as perfect as an angel; that he can be absolutely perfect; that he can be infallible, or above being tempted; or, that the moment he is pure in heart, he cannot fall from it. To this, however, his own language had given occasion; for the doctrine which he taught of "a free, full, and present salvation from all the guilt, all the power, and all the in-being of sin," differs but a hair's breadth from the tenet which he now justly condemned. He objected to their saying, "that one saved from sin needs nothing more than looking to Jesus, — needs not to hear or think of any thing else; *believe, believe*, is enough: that he needs no self-examination, no times of private prayer; needs not mind little or outward things; and that he cannot be taught by any person who is not in the same state." He disliked, he said, "something that had the appearance of enthusiasm, overvaluing feelings, and inward impressions; mistaking the mere work of imagination for the voice of the Spirit; expecting the end without the means, and undervaluing reason, knowledge, and wisdom in general." He disliked

"something that had the appearance of Antinomianism; not magnifying the law and making it honourable; not enough valuing tenderness of conscience, and exact watchfulness in order thereto, and using faith rather as contra-distinguished from holiness, than as productive of it." He blamed them for slighting any, the very least rules of the Bands, or Society; for the disorder and extravagances which they introduced in their public meetings; and, above all, for the bitter and uncharitable spirit which they manifested toward all who differed from them. And he bade them read this letter of mild reproof, calmly and impartially before the Lord, in prayer; so, he said, should the evil cease, and the good remain, and they would then be more than ever united to him.

Wesley was not then aware of Maxfield's intention to set up for himself, and hardly yet suspected the insanity of Bell, his colleague. Upon hearing the latter hold forth, he believed that part of what he said was from God, (so willing was Wesley to be deceived in such things!) and part from an heated imagination; and seeing, he says, nothing dangerously wrong, he did not think it necessary to hinder him. The next trial, however, convinced him that Bell must not be suffered to pray at the Foundry: "the reproach of Christ," said he, "I am willing to bear, but not the reproach of enthusiasm, if I can help it." That nothing might be done hastily, he suffered him to speak twice more; "but," says he, "it was worse and worse. He now spoke, as from God, what I knew God

had not spoken; I therefore desired that he would come thither no more." The excommunication, indeed, could no longer be * delayed, for George Bell had commenced prophet, and proclaimed every where that the world was to be at an end on the 28th of February following. This, however, was the signal for separation: several hundreds of the Society in London threw up their tickets, and withdrew from their connection with Wesley, saying, "Blind John is not capable of teaching us,—we will keep to Mr. Maxfield!" for Maxfield was the leader of the separatists, and Bell, notwithstanding his prophetic pretensions, appeared only as one of his followers. He, indeed, was at this time a downright honest madman. The part which Maxfield acted was more suspicious; he neither declared a belief or disbelief in the prediction, but he took advantage of the prophet's popularity, to collect a flock among his believers, and form an establishment for himself.

* Wesley was evidently conscious that he had delayed it too long, and that he had lost credit, by being, or appearing to be, for a time deceived by this madman. The apology which he makes is any thing but ingenuous. "Perhaps," he says, "reason (unenlightened) makes me simple. If I knew less of human nature, I should be more apt to stumble at the weakness of it; and if I had not too, by nature or by grace, some clearness of apprehension. It is owing to this (under God) that I never staggered at all at the reveries of George Bell. I saw instantly from the beginning, and at the beginning, what was right, and what was wrong; but I saw, withal, 'I have many things to speak, but ye cannot bear them now.' Hence many imagine I was imposed upon, and applauded themselves on their own greater perspicuity, as they do at this day. But if you knew it, said his friend to Gregorio Lopez, why *did* you not tell me? I answer with him, 'I do not speak all I *know*, but what I judge needful.'"

Often as the end of the world has been prophesied by madmen, such a prediction has never failed to excite considerable agitation. Wesley exerted himself to counteract the panic which had been raised; and, on the day appointed, he exposed, in a sermon, the utter absurdity of the supposition that the world would be at an end that night. But he says that, notwithstanding all he could say, many were afraid to go to bed, and some wandered about the fields, being persuaded that, if the world did not end, at least London would be swallowed up by an earthquake. He had the prudence, before the day arrived, to insert an advertisement in the provincial newspapers, disclaiming all connection with the prophet or the prophecy; a precaution which was of great service to poor George Story; for, in the course of itinerating, he arrived at Darlington on the day appointed. The people in that neighbourhood had been sorely frightened; but fear had given place to indignation, and in their wrath, they threatened to pull down the Methodist preaching house, and burn the first preacher who should dare to show his face among them. Little as Story was of an enthusiast, he told the mistress of the house, if she would venture the house, he would venture himself; and, upon producing the advertisement in the Newcastle paper, and reading it to the people, they were satisfied, and made no further disturbance. George Bell recovered his senses, to make a deplorable use of them: passing from one extreme to another, the ignorant enthusiast be-

came an ignorant infidel; turned fanatic in politics as he had done in religion; and having gone through all the degrees of disaffection and disloyalty, died, at a great age, a radical reformer.

This affair, if it made Wesley more cautious for awhile, did not lessen his habitual credulity. His disposition to believe whatever he was told, however improbable the fact, or insufficient the evidence, was not confined to preternatural tales. He listened to every old woman's nostrum for a disease, and collected so many of them, that he thought himself qualified at last to commence practitioner in medicine. Accordingly he announced in London his intention of giving physic to the poor, and they came for many years in great numbers, till the expence of distributing medicines to them was greater than the Society could support. At the same time, for the purpose of enabling people to cure themselves, he published his collection of receipts, under the title of Primitive Physic: or, an easy and natural Method of curing most Diseases. In his preface he showed, that the art of healing was originally founded on experiments, and so became traditional: enquiring men, in process of time, began to reason upon the facts which they knew, and formed theories of physic which, when thus made theoretical, was soon converted into a mystery and a craft. Some lovers of mankind, however, had still, from time to time, endeavoured to bring it back to its ancient footing, and make it, as it was at the beginning, a plain

intelligible thing; professing to know nothing more, than that certain maladies might be removed by certain medicines; and his mean hand, he said, had made a like attempt, in which he had only consulted experience, common sense, and the common interest of mankind.

The previous directions which he gave for preventing disease, were in general judicious. He advised early hours, regular exercise, plain diet, and temperance: and he pointed out, not without effect, the physical benefits which resulted from a moral and religious life. "All violent and sudden passions," he said, "dispose to, or actually throw people into acute diseases. The slow and lasting passions, such as grief, and hopeless love, bring on chronical diseases. Till the passion which caused the disease is calmed, medicine is applied in vain. The love of God, as it is the sovereign remedy of all miseries, so, in particular, it effectually prevents all the bodily disorders the passions introduce, by keeping the passions themselves within due bounds; and, by the unspeakable joy, and perfect calm serenity and tranquillity it gives the mind, it becomes the most powerful of all the means of health and long life.'" In his directions to the sick, he recommends them to "add to the rest (for it is not labour lost) that old unfashionable medicine, prayer; and to have faith in God, who 'killeth and maketh alive, who bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up.'" The book itself must have done great mischief, and probably may

still continue so to do; for it has been most* extensively circulated, and it evinces throughout a lamentable want of judgment, and a perilous rashness, advising sometimes means of ridiculous inefficacy in the most dangerous cases, and sometimes remedies so rude, that it would be marvellous if they did not destroy the patient. He believed, however, that he had cured himself of what was pronounced to be a confirmed consumption, and had every symptom of it, by his favourite prescription for pleurisy, a plaister of brimstone and white of egg, spread upon brown paper. Upon applying this, the pain in his side, he says, was removed in a few minutes, the fever in half an hour, and, from that hour, he began to recover strength. His death had been so fully expected, that Whitefield wrote him a farewell letter, in the most affectionate terms, and a consolatory one to his brother Charles. And he himself, not knowing, he says, how it might please God to dispose of him, and to prevent vile panegyric, wrote his own epitaph, in these words:

* The current edition, which is now before me, is the twenty-eighth. The cold-bath is prescribed for ague, just before the cold fit; for preventing apoplexy; for weak infants, every day; and for cancer. For films in the sight, the eyes are to be touched with lunar caustic every day; or *zibethum occidentale*, dried slowly, and finely pulverized, is to be blown into them. For *siphylis*, an ounce of quicksilver every morning; and for the twisting of the intestines, quicksilver, ounce by ounce, to the amount of one, two, or three pounds! Toasted cheese is recommended for a cut; and, for a rupture in children, "boil a spoonful of egg-shells, dried in an oven, and powdered, in a pint of milk, and feed the child constantly with bread boiled in this milk!"

HERE LIETH
THE BODY OF JOHN WESLEY,
A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE BURNING:
WHO DIED OF A CONSUMPTION IN THE FIFTY-FIRST YEAR
OF HIS AGE,
NOT LEAVING, AFTER HIS DEBTS ARE PAID, TEN POUNDS
BEHIND HIM;
PRAYING
GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME AN UNPROFITABLE SERVANT!

"He ordered that this (if any) inscription should be placed on his tomb-stone."

CHAPTER XXV.

PROGRESS OF CALVINISTIC METHODISM. — DEATH OF WHITEFIELD. — FINAL BREACH BETWEEN WESLEY AND THE CALVINISTS.

WHITEFIELD had not continued long at enmity with Wesley. He was sensible that he had given him great and just offence by publishing the story of the lots, and he acknowledged this, and asked his pardon. Wesley's was a heart in which resentment never could strike root: the difference between them, therefore, as far as it was personal, was made up; but, upon the doctrines in dispute, they remained as widely separate as ever, and their respective followers were less charitable than themselves.

Whitefield also had become a married man. He had determined upon this in America, and opened his intentions in a characteristic letter to the parents of the lady whom he was disposed to chuse. He told them, that he found a mistress was necessary for the management of his increasing family at the Orphan-house, and it had therefore been much impressed upon his heart that he should marry, in order to have a help meet for him in the work whereunto he was called. "This," he proceeded, "comes (like Abraham's servant to Rebekah's relations) to know whether you think your daughter,

Miss E., is a proper person to engage in such an undertaking? If so, whether you will be pleased to give me leave to propose marriage unto her? You need not be afraid of sending me a refusal; for, I bless God, if I know any thing of my own heart, I am free from that foolish passion which the world calls love. I write, only because I believe it is the will of God that I should alter my state; but your denial will fully convince me, that your daughter is not the person appointed by God for me. But I have sometimes thought Miss E. would be my help-mate, for she has often been impressed upon my heart. After strong crying and tears at the throne of grace for direction, and after unspeakable trouble with my own heart, I write this. Be pleased to spread the letter before the Lord; and if you think this motion to be of Him, be pleased to deliver the inclosed to your daughter. If not, say nothing; only let me know you disapprove of it, and that shall satisfy your obliged friend and servant in Christ." The letter to the lady was written in the same temper. It invited her to partake of a way of life, which nothing but devotion and enthusiasm like his could render endurable. He told her he had great reason to believe it was the divine will that he should alter his condition, and had often thought she was the person appointed for him; but he should still wait on the Lord for direction, and heartily entreat him, that, if this motion were not of Him, it might come to nought. "I much like," said he, "the manner of Isaac's marrying with Rebekah; and think no

marriage can succeed well, unless both parties concerned are like-minded with Tobias and his wife. I make no great profession to you, because I believe you think me sincere. The passionate expressions which carnal courtiers use, I think, ought to be avoided by those that would marry in the Lord. I can only promise, by the help of God, to keep my matrimonial vow, and to do what I can towards helping you forward in the great work of your salvation. If you think marriage will be any way prejudicial to your better part, be so kind as to send me a denial." The Moravian arrangement for pairing their members would have been very convenient for a person of this temper.

The reply which he received informed him, that the lady was in a seeking state only, and surely, he said, that would not do: he must have one that was full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Such an one he thought he had found in a widow at Abergavenny, by name James, who was between thirty and forty, and, by his own account, neither rich nor beautiful, but having once been gay, was now "a despised follower of the Lamb." He spoke of his marriage in language which would seem profane, unless large allowances were made for the indiscreet and offensive phraseology of those who call themselves religious professors. The success of his preaching appears at this time to have intoxicated him; he fancied that something like a gift of prophecy had been imparted to him; and, when his wife became pregnant, he announced

that the child would be a boy, and become a preacher of the gospel. It proved a boy, and the father publicly baptized him in the Tabernacle, and, in the presence of a crowded congregation, solemnly devoted him to the service of God. At the end of four months the child died, and Whitefield then acknowledged that he had been under a delusion: "Satan," he said, "had been permitted to give him some wrong impressions, whereby he had misapplied several texts of scripture." The lesson was severe, but not in vain, for it saved him from any future extravagances of that kind. His marriage was not* a happy one; and the death of his wife is said, by one of his friends, to have "set his mind much at liberty." It is asserted that she did not behave in all respects as she ought; but it is admitted, that their disagreement was increased by some persons who made pretensions to more holiness than they possessed. Whitefield was irritable, and impatient of contradiction: and, even if his temper had been as happily constituted as Wesley's, his habits of life must have made him, like Wesley, a most uncomfortable husband.

His popularity, however, was greatly on the increase. So great, indeed, was his confidence in his powers over the rudest of mankind, that he ventured upon preaching to the rabble in Moor-

* It was not likely to be so, as may be judged from what he says to one of his married friends: "I hope you are not *nimis uxorius*. Take heed, my dear B., take heed! Time is short. It remains that those who have wives, be as though they had none. Let nothing intercept or interrupt your communion with the bridegroom of the Church."

fields during the Whitsun holydays, when, as he said, Satan's children kept up their annual rendezvous there. This was a sort of pitched battle with Satan, and Whitefield displayed some generalship upon the occasion. He took the field betimes, with a large congregation of "praying people" to attend him, and began at six in the morning, before the enemy had mustered in strength. Not above ten thousand persons were assembled waiting for the sports; and, having nothing else to do, they, for mere pastime, presently flocked round his field-pulpit. "Glad was I to find," says he, "that I had, for once, as it were, got the start of the devil." Encouraged by the success of his morning preaching, he ventured there again at noon, when, in his own words, "the fields, the whole fields, seemed, in a bad sense of the word, all white, ready, not for the Redeemer's, but Beelzebub's harvest. All his agents were in full motion; drummers, trumpeters, merry-andrews, masters of puppet-shows, exhibitors of wild beasts, players, &c. &c. all busy in entertaining their respective auditories." He estimated the crowd to consist of from twenty to thirty thousand persons; and thinking that, like St. Paul, he should now, in a metaphorical sense, be called to fight with wild beasts, he took for his text, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians."—"You may easily guess," says he, "that there was some noise among the craftsmen, and that I was honoured with having a few stones, dirt, rotten eggs, and pieces of dead cats thrown at me while engaged in calling them from

their favourite but lying vanities. My soul was, indeed, among lions; but far the greatest part of my congregation, which was very large, seemed for a while to be turned into lambs." He then gave notice that he would preach again at six in the evening. "I came," he says, "I saw,—but what?—thousands, and thousands more than before, if possible, still more deeply engaged in their unhappy diversions, but some thousands amongst them waiting as earnestly to hear the Gospel. This Satan could not brook. One of his choicest servants was exhibiting, trumpeting on a large stage; but as soon as the people saw me in my black robes, and my pulpit, I think all, to a man, left him and ran to me. For a while I was enabled to lift up my voice like a trumpet, and many heard the joyful sound. God's people kept praying, and the enemy's agents made a kind of roaring at some distance from our camp. At length they approached nearer, and the merry-andrew (attended by others, who complained that they had taken many pounds less that day, on account of my preaching) got upon a man's shoulders, and advancing near the pulpit, attempted to slash me with a long heavy whip several times, but always, with the violence of his motion, tumbled down." Soon afterwards, they got a recruiting serjeant, with his drums, fifes, and followers, to pass through the congregation. But Whitefield, by his tactics, baffled this manœuvre: he ordered them to make way for the king's officers; the ranks opened, and when the party had marched through, closed again. When

the uproar became, as it sometimes did, such as to overpower his single voice, he called the voices of all his people to his aid, and began singing; and thus, what with singing, praying, and preaching, he continued, by his own account, three hours upon the ground, till the darkness made it time to break up. So great was the impression which this wonderful man produced in this extraordinary scene, that more than a thousand notes were handed up to him, from persons who, as the phrase is, were *brought under concern* by his preaching that day, and three hundred and fifty persons joined his congregation.

On the Tuesday he removed to Mary-le-bone fields, a place of similar resort. Here a Quaker had prepared a very high pulpit for him, but not having fixed the supports well in the ground, the preacher found himself in some jeopardy, especially when the mob endeavoured to push the circle of his friends against it, and so to throw it down. But he had a narrower escape after he had descended; "for as I was passing," says he, "from the pulpit to the coach, I felt my wig and hat to be almost off: I turned about, and observed a sword just touching my temples. A young rake, as I afterwards found, was determined to stab me; but a gentleman, seeing the sword thrusting near me, struck it up with his cane, and so the destined victim providentially escaped." The man who made this atrocious attempt, probably in a fit of drunken fury, was seized by the people, and would have been handled as severely as he de-

served, if one of Whitefield's friends had not sheltered him. The following day Whitefield returned to the attack in Moorfields; and here he gave a striking example of that ready talent which turns every thing to its purpose. A merry-andrew finding that no common acts of buffoonery were of any avail, got into a tree near the pulpit, and, as much, perhaps, in despite, as in insult, exposed his bare posteriors to the preacher, in the sight of all the people. The more brutal mob applauded him with loud laughter, while decent persons were abashed; and Whitefield himself was, for a moment, confounded; but instantly recovering himself, he appealed to all, since now they had such a spectacle before them, whether he had wronged human nature in saying, with Bishop Hall, that man, when left to himself, is half a fiend and half a brute; or, in calling him, with William Law, a motley mixture of the beast and devil! The appeal was not lost upon the crowd, whatever it might be upon the wretch by whom it was occasioned. A circumstance at these adventurous preachings is mentioned, which affected Whitefield himself, and must have produced considerable effect upon others: — several children, of both sexes, used to sit round him, on the pulpit, while he preached, for the purpose of handing to him the notes, which were delivered by persons upon whom his exhortations had acted as he desired. These poor children were exposed to all the missiles with which he was assailed; however much they were terrified or hurt, they never shrunk, "but, on the

contrary," says he, "every time I was struck, they turned up their little weeping eyes, and seemed to wish they could receive the blows for me."

Shortly after his separation from Wesley, some Calvinistic dissenters built a large shed for him, near the Foundry, upon a piece of ground which was lent for the purpose, till he should return to America. From the temporary nature of the structure, they called it a Tabernacle, in allusion to the moveable place of worship of the Israelites during their journey in the wilderness; and the name being in puritanical taste, became the designation of all the chapels of the Calvinistic Methodists. In this place Whitefield was assisted by Cennick, and others, who sided with him at the division; and he employed lay-preachers with less reluctance than Wesley had done, because the liking which he had acquired in America for the old puritans had, in some degree, alienated his feelings from the church, and his predestinarian opinions brought him in contact with the dissenters. But Whitefield had neither the ambition of founding a separate community, nor the talent for it; he would have contented himself with being the founder of the Orphan-house at Savannah, and with the effect which he produced as a roving preacher; and Calvinistic Methodism, perhaps, might never have been embodied into a separate sect, if it had not found a patroness in Selina Countess of Huntingdon.

This "noble and elect lady," as her followers have called her, was daughter of Washington Earl

of Ferrers, and widow of Theophilus Earl of Huntingdon. There was a decided insanity in her family. Her sisters-in-law, Lady Betty and Lady Margaret Hastings, were of a religious temper; the former had been the patroness of the first Methodists at Oxford; the latter had become a disciple and at length married Wesley's old pupil and fellow-missionary Ingham. Lady Margaret communicated her opinions to the Countess; the Wesleys were called in to her, after a dangerous illness, which had been terminated by the new birth; and her husband's tutor, Bishop Benson, who was sent for afterwards, in hopes that he might restore her to a saner sense of devotion, found all his arguments ineffectual; instead of receiving instructions from him, she was disposed to be the teacher, quoted the homilies against him, insisted upon her own interpretation of the articles, and attacked him upon the awful responsibility of his station. All this is said to have irritated him; the emotion which he must needs have felt, might have been more truly, as well as more charitably, interpreted; and when he left her, he lamented that he had ever laid his hands upon George Whitefield. "My lord," she replied, "mark my words! when you come upon your dying bed, that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacence."

During the Earl's life she restrained herself, in deference to his wishes; but, becoming mistress of herself, and of a liberal income, at his death, she took a more decided and public part, and, had means permitted, would have done as much for

Methodism as the Countess Matilda did for the Papacy. Upon Whitefield's return from America, in 1748, he was invited to her house at Chelsea as soon as he landed. And after he had officiated there twice, she wrote to him, inviting him again, that some of the nobility might hear him. "Blessed be God," he says, in his reply, "that the rich and great begin to have an hearing ear: I think it is a good sign that our Lord intends to give, to some at least, an obedient heart. How wonderfully does our Redeemer deal with souls! If they will hear the gospel only under a ceiled roof, ministers shall be sent to them there: if only in a church, or a field, they shall have it there. A word in the lesson, when I was last with your ladyship, struck me,—*Paul preached privately to those that were of reputation.* This must be the way, I presume, of dealing with the nobility, who yet know not the Lord." This is characteristic; and his answer to a second note, respecting the time, is still more so. "Ever since the reading your ladyship's condescending letter, my soul has been overpowered with his presence, who is all in all. When your ladyship stiled me *your friend*, I was amazed at your condescension; but when I thought that Jesus was my friend, it quite overcame me, and made me to lie prostrate before him, crying, Why me? why me? I just now rose from the ground, after praying the Lord of all lords to water your soul, honoured madam, every moment. As there seems to be a door opening for the nobility to hear the Gospel, I will defer my journey, and, God

willing, preach at your ladyship's. Oh that God may be with me, and make me humble! I am ashamed to think your ladyship will admit me under your roof; much more am I amazed that the Lord Jesus will make use of such a creature as I am;—quite astonished at your ladyship's condescension, and the unmerited superabounding grace and goodness of Him, who has loved me, and given Himself for me." Wesley would not have written in this strain, which, for its servile adulation, and its canting vanity, might well provoke disgust and indignation, were not the real genius and piety of the writer beyond all doubt. Such, however, as the language is, it was natural in Whitefield, and not ill suited for the person to whom it was addressed.

Lord Chesterfield and Bolingbroke were among his auditors at Chelsea: the Countess had done well in inviting those persons who stood most in need of repentance. The former complimented the preacher with his usual courtliness; the latter is said to have been much moved at the discourse: he invited Whitefield to visit him, and seems to have endeavoured to pass from infidelity to Calvinism, if he could. Lady Huntingdon, flattered, perhaps, by the applause which was bestowed upon the performance, appointed Whitefield one of her chaplains. He, at this time, writing to Mr. Wesley, says, "What have you thought about an union? I am afraid an external one is impracticable. I find, by your sermons, that we differ in principles more than I thought, and I believe we are

upon two different plans. My attachment to America will not permit me to abide very long in England, consequently I should but weave a Penelope's web if I formed societies; and, if I should form them, I have not proper assistants to take care of them; I intend, therefore, to go about preaching the Gospel to every creature." In saying that he had "no party to be at the head of," and that, through God's grace, he would have none, Whitefield only disclaimed the desire of placing himself in a situation which he was not competent to fill; at this very time he was sufficiently willing that a party should be formed, of which he might be the honorary head, while the management was in other hands. For he told the Elect Lady that a leader was wanting; and that that honour had been put on her ladyship by the great head of the church,—an honour which had been conferred on few, but which was an earnest of what she was to receive before men and angels when time should be no more. That honour Lady Huntingdon accepted. She built chapels in various places, which were called hers, and procured Calvinistic clergymen to officiate in them. After a time, a sufficient supply of ordained ministers could not be found, and some began to draw back, when they perceived that the course of action, in which they were engaged, tended manifestly to schism. This, however, did not deter her Ladyship from proceeding; she followed the example of Mr. Wesley, and employed laymen without scruple; and as the chapels were called Lady Huntingdon's chapels,

the persons who officiated were called Lady Huntingdon's preachers. At length she set up a seminary for such preachers, at Trevecca, in South Wales; and this was called Lady Huntingdon's College, and the Calvinistic Methodists went by the name of Lady Huntingdon's Connection. The terms of admission were, that the students should be truly converted to God, and resolved to dedicate themselves to his service. During three years they were to be boarded and instructed gratuitously, at her Ladyship's cost, and supplied every year with a suit of clothes: at the end of that time they were either to take orders, or enter the ministry among dissenters of any denomination.

Sincere devotee as the Countess was, she retained much of the pride of birth. For this reason Whitefield, who talked of her amazing condescension in patronizing him, would have been more acceptable to her than Wesley, even if he had not obtained a preference in her esteem because of his Calvinism; and perhaps this disposition inclined her, unconsciously, to favour a doctrine which makes a privileged order of souls. Wesley, therefore, who neither wanted, nor would have admitted, patron or patroness to be the temporal head of the societies which he had formed, and was as little likely to act a subordinate part under Lady Huntingdon as under Count Zinzendorff, seems never to have been cordially liked by her, and gradually grew into disfavour. The reconciliation with Whitefield was, perhaps, produced more by a regard to appearances on both sides, than by

any feeling on either. Such a wound as had been made in their friendship always leaves a scar, however well it may have healed. They interchanged letters, not very frequently; and they preached occasionally in each other's pulpits; but there was no cordial intercourse, no hearty co-operation. Whitefield saw, and disapproved in Wesley, that ambition of which the other was not conscious in himself, largely as it entered into the elements of his character; and Wesley, on the other hand, who felt his own superiority in intellect and knowledge, regarded, probably, as a weakness, the homage which was paid by Whitefield to persons in high life. Yet they did justice to each other's intentions and virtues; and old feelings sometimes rose again, as from the dead, like the blossoming of spring flowers in autumn, which remind us that the season of hope and of joyance is gone by. It is pleasant to observe, that this tenderness increased as they advanced toward the decline of life. When Whitefield returned from America to England for the last time, Wesley was struck with the change in his appearance: "he seemed," says he in his Journal, "to be an old man, being fairly worn out in his Master's service, though he has hardly seen fifty years; and yet it pleases God that I, who am now in my sixty-third year, find no disorder, no weakness, no decay, no difference from what I was at five-and-twenty; only that I have fewer teeth, and more grey hairs."

Lady Huntingdon had collected about her a knot of Calvinistic clergy, some of them of high

birth, and abounding as much with bigotry and intolerance as with zeal. Whitefield, however, at this time, to use Wesley's language, breathed nothing but peace and love. "Bigotry," said he, "cannot stand before him, but hides its head wherever he comes. My brother and I conferred with him every day; and, let the honourable men do what they please, we resolved, by the grace of God, to go on hand in hand, through honour and dishonour." Accordingly Wesley preached in the Countess's chapel, where, he says, many were not a little surprised at seeing him, and where, it appears, that he did not expect to be often invited; for he adds, that he was in no concern whether he preached there again or not. Whitefield and Howel Harris (a man whose genuine charity was no ways corrupted by his opinions) attended at the next Conference.

This union continued till Whitefield returned to America, in 1769, and died there in the following year. A fear of outliving his usefulness had often depressed him: and one day, when giving way to an irritable temper, he brought tears from one who had not deserved such treatment, he burst into tears himself, and exclaimed, "I shall live to be a poor peevish old man, and every body will be tired of me!" He wished for a sudden death, and that blessing was so far vouchsafed him, that the illness which proved fatal was only of a few hours' continuance. It was a fit of asthma: when it seized him first, one of his friends expressed a wish that he would not preach so often; and his

reply was, "I had rather *wear* out than *rust* out." He died at Newbury-Port, in New-England, and, according to his own desire, was buried before the pulpit, in the Presbyterian church of that town. Every mark of respect was shown to his remains: all the bells in the town tolled, and the ships in the harbour fired mourning guns, and hung their flags half-mast high. In Georgia, all the black cloth in the stores was bought up, and the church was hung with black: the governor and council met at the state-house in deep mourning, and went in procession to hear a funeral sermon. Funeral honours also were performed throughout the tabernacles in England. He had been asked who should preach his funeral sermon, in case of his dying abroad: whether it should be his old friend Mr. Wesley; and had always replied, he is the man. Mr. Wesley, therefore, by desire of the executors, preached at the tabernacle in Tottenham-court Road, (the high-church of the sect,) and in many other places did the same, wishing, he said, to show all possible respect to the memory of so great and good a man. Upon this occasion he expresses a hope in his Journal, that God had now given a blow to that bigotry which had prevailed for many years: but it broke out, ere long, with more virulence than ever.

Notwithstanding Mr. Wesley's endeavours to guard his followers against the Antinomian errors, the stream of Methodism had set in that way. It is a course which enthusiasm naturally takes wherever, from a blind spirit of antipathy to the Romanists, solifidianism is preached. To correct

this perilous tendency, (for, of all doctrinal errors, there is none of which the practical consequences are so pernicious,) Wesley said, in the Conference of 1771, "Take heed to your doctrine! we have leaned too much toward Calvinism. 1. With regard to *man's faithfulness*: our Lord himself taught us to use the expression, and we ought never to be ashamed of it. 2. With regard to *working for life*: this also our Lord has expressly commanded us. *Labour*, ἐργαζεσθε, literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*. 3. We have received it as a maxim, that a man is to do nothing *in order to* justification. Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should *cease from evil, and learn to do well*. Whoever repents, should do *works meet for repentance*. And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for? Is not this salvation by works? Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid *about words*. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded *according to our works*, yea, *because of our works*. How does this differ from *for the sake of our works*? And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*, as our works *deserve*? Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.—Does not talking of a justified or sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment; whereas we are every hour, and every moment, pleasing or displeasing to God,

according to our works; according to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behaviour."

This language, candid, frank, and reasonable as it is,—in every way honourable to Mr. Wesley, shocked the high-flying Calvinists. The alarm was taken at Trevecca; and, notwithstanding the specious liberality which had been professed, Lady Huntingdon declared, that whoever did not fully disavow these minutes, must quit the college. The students and masters were called upon to deliver their sentiments in writing, without reserve. The superintendant, in so doing, explained, vindicated, and approved the doctrine of Mr. Wesley, though he considered the wording as unguarded, and not sufficiently explicit; and he resigned his appointment accordingly, wishing that the Countess might find a minister to preside, there less insufficient than himself, and more willing to go certain lengths in party spirit.

Jean Guillaume de la Flechere, who thus withdrew from Trevecca, was a man of rare talents, and rarer virtue. No age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety, or more perfect charity; no church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister. He was born at Nyon, in the Pays de Vaud, of a respectable Bernese family, descended from a noble house in Savoy. Having been educated for the ministry at Geneva, he found himself unable to subscribe to the doctrine of predestination, and resolved to seek preferment as a soldier of fortune. Accordingly he went to Lisbon, obtained a commission in the Portugueze

service, and was ordered to Brazil. A lucky accident, which confined him to his bed when the ship sailed, saved him from a situation where his fine intellect would have been lost, and his philanthropic piety would have had no room to display itself. He left Portugal for the prospect of active service in the Low Countries, and that prospect also being disappointed by peace, he came over to England, improved himself in the language, and became tutor in the family of Mr. Hill, of Fern-Hall, in Shropshire. The love of God and of man abounded in his heart; and finding, among the Methodists, that sympathy which he desired, he joined them, and, for a time, took to ascetic courses, of which he afterwards acknowledged the error. He lived on vegetables, and, for some time, on milk and water, and bread; he sat up two whole nights in every week, for the purpose of praying, and reading and meditating on religious things; and, on the other nights, never allowed himself to sleep, as long as he could keep his attention to the book before him. At length, by the advice of his friends, Mr. Hill, and of Mr. Wesley, whom he consulted, he took orders in the English church. The ordination took place in the Chapel-Royal, St. James's, and, as soon as it was over, he went to the Methodist chapel in West-Street, where he assisted in administering the Lord's Supper. Wesley had never received so seasonable an assistance. "How wonderful are the ways of God!" said he, in his Journal. "When my bodily strength failed, and

none in England were able and willing to assist me, He sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland, and an help meet for me in every respect. Where could I have found such another!" It proved a more efficient and important help than Mr. Wesley could then have anticipated.

Mr. Fletcher (for so he now called himself, being completely anglicised,) incurred some displeasure, by the decided manner in which he connected himself with the Methodists: neither his talents nor his virtues were yet understood beyond the circle of his friends. By Mr. Hill's means, however, he was presented to the vicarage of Madely, in Shropshire, about three years after his ordination. It is a populous village, in which there were extensive collieries and iron works; and the character of the inhabitants was, in consequence, what, to the reproach and curse of England, it generally is, wherever mines or manufactures of any kind have brought together a crowded population. Mr. Fletcher had, at one time, officiated there as curate; he now entered upon his duty with zeal proportioned to the arduous nature of the service which he had pledged himself to perform. That zeal made him equally disregardful of appearances and of danger. The whole rents of his small patrimonial estate in the Pays de Vaud were set apart for charitable uses, and he drew so liberally from his other funds for the same purpose, that his furniture and wardrobe were not spared. Because some of his remoter parishioners excused themselves for not attending the morning service,

by pleading that they did not wake early enough to get their families ready, for some months he set out every Sunday, at five o'clock, with a bell in his hand, and went round the most distant parts of the parish, to call up the people. And wherever hearers could be collected in the surrounding country, within ten or fifteen miles, thither he went to preach to them on week days, though he seldom got home before one or two in the morning. At first, the rabble of his parishioners resented the manner in which he ventured to reprove and exhort them in the midst of their lewd revels and riotous meetings; for he would frequently burst in upon them, without any fear of the consequence to himself. The publicans and maltmen were his especial enemies. A mob of colliers, who were one day baiting a bull, determined to pull him off his horse as he went to preach, set the dogs upon him, and, in their own phrase, bait the parson; but the bull broke loose, and dispersed them before he arrived. In spite, however, of the opposition which his eccentricities excited, not from the ignorant only, but from some of the neighbouring clergy and magistrates, he won upon the people, rude and brutal as they were, by the invincible benevolence which was manifested in his whole manner of life; till at length his church, which at first had been so scantily attended, that he was discouraged as well as mortified by the smallness of the congregation, began to overflow.

Such was the person who, without any emolument, had undertaken the charge of superintending,

in occasional visits, the college at Trevecka, and who withdrew from that charge when Lady Huntingdon called upon all persons in that seminary to disavow the doctrines of Mr. Wesley's minutes, or leave the place. He had at that time no intention or apprehension of taking any farther part in the dispute. Shortly afterwards the Honourable Walter Shirley, one of her Ladyship's chaplains, and of the Calvinistic clergy who had formed a party under her patronage, sent forth a circular letter, stating, that whereas Mr. Wesley's next Conference was to be held at Bristol, it was proposed by Lady Huntingdon, and many other Christian friends, to have a meeting in that city at the same time, of such principal persons, both clergy and laity, who disapproved of the obnoxious minutes; and, as the doctrines therein avowed were thought injurious to the very fundamental principles of Christianity, it was farther proposed, that these persons should go in a body to the Conference, and insist upon a formal recantation of the said minutes, and, in case of a refusal, sign and publish their protest against them. "Your presence, Sir," the letter proceeded, "is particularly requested; but if it should not suit your convenience to be there, it is desired that you will transmit your sentiments on the subject to such person as you think proper to produce them. It is submitted to you, whether it would not be right, in the opposition to be made to such a dreadful heresy, to recommend it to as many of your Christian friends, as well of the Dissenters as of

the established Church, as you can prevail on, to be there, the cause being of so public a nature." Lodgings were to be provided for the persons who attended.

The proceedings were not so furious as might have been expected from a declaration of war like this. The heat of the Calvinistic party seemed to have spent itself in the first explosion. Mr. Wesley was truly a man of peace; and when the Conference and the anti-council met, the result, unlike that of most other pitched disputations upon points of theology, was something like an accommodation. The meeting was managed with perfect temper on both sides, and with a conciliatory spirit on the part of Shirley himself; a man whose intentions were better than his judgement. Mr. Wesley and the Conference declared, that, in framing the obnoxious minutes, no such meaning was intended as was imputed to them. "We abhor," they said, "the doctrine of justification by works, as a most perilous and abominable doctrine; and as the said minutes are not sufficiently guarded in the way they are expressed, we hereby solemnly declare, in the sight of God, that we have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, for justification or salvation, either in life, death, or the day of judgement; and though no one is a real Christian believer (and consequently cannot be saved) who doth not good works, where there is time and opportunity, yet our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our justification, either

in whole or in part." Mr. Shirley declared himself satisfied with this declaration, and the interview was concluded with prayer, and professions of peace and love.

These were but fallacious appearances: the old question had been mooted, and the * dispute broke out with greater violence than ever. On the part of the Arminians, it was carried on by Walter Sellon, who was originally a baker, then one of Wesley's lay-preachers, and had afterwards, by means of Lady Huntingdon's influence, obtained orders: by Thomas Olivers, who, like a sturdy and honest Welshman as he was, refused, at the Conference, to subscribe the declaration; and by Mr. Fletcher. On the part of the Calvinists, the most conspicuous writers were the brothers Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) and Rowland Hill, and Augustus Montague Toplady, vicar of Broad Hembury, in Devonshire. Never were any writings more thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism, than those of the predestinarian champions. It would scarcely be credible, that three persons, of good birth and education, and of unquestionable goodness and piety, should

* The sort of recantation which was made in this declaration gave occasion to the following verses by one of the hostile party:

Whereas the religion, and fate of three nations,
Depend on the importance of our conversations;
Whereas some objections are thrown in our way,
And words have been construed to mean what they say;
Be it known, from henceforth, to each friend and each brother,
Whene'er we say one thing, we mean quite another.

have carried on controversy in so vile a manner, and with so detestable a spirit,—if the hatred of theologians had not, unhappily, become proverbial. Berridge, of Everton, also, who was buffoon as well as fanatic, engaged on their side; and even Harvey's nature was so far soured by his opinions, that he wrote in an acrimonious style against Mr. Wesley, whose real piety he knew, and whom he had once regarded as his spiritual father.

The ever-memorable Toplady, as his admirers call him, and who, they say, "stands paramount in the plenitude of dignity above most of his contemporaries," was bred at Westminster, and, according to his own account, converted at the age of sixteen, by the sermon of an ignorant lay-preacher, in a barn in Ireland. He was an injudicious man, hasty in forming conclusions, and intemperate in advancing them; but his intellect was quick and lively, and his manner of writing, though coarse, was always vigorous and sometimes fortunate. A little before that Conference which brought out the whole Calvinistic force against Wesley, Mr. Toplady published a Treatise upon absolute Predestination, chiefly translated from the Latin of Zanchius. Mr. Wesley set forth an analysis of this treatise, for the purpose of exposing its monstrous doctrine, and concluded in these words: "The sum of all this:—one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can.

Reader, believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand, A—— T——." Toplady denied the consequences, and accused Mr. Wesley of intending to palm the paragraph on the world as his. "In almost any other case," said he, "a similar forgery would transmit the criminal to Virginia or Maryland, if not to Tyburn. The satanic guilt of the person who could excogitate and publish to the world a position like that, baffles all power of description, and is only to be exceeded (if exceedable) by the satanic shamelessness which dares to lay the black position at the door of other men."

Most certainly Mr. Wesley had no intention that this passage should pass for Mr. Toplady's writing. He gave it as the sum of his doctrine; and, stripping that doctrine of all disguise, exposed it thus in its naked monstrosity. After vindicating himself by stating this, he left Olivers to carry on the contest with his incensed antagonist. This provoked Toplady the more. "Let Mr. Wesley," said he, "fight his own battles. I am as ready as ever to meet him with the sling of reason and the stone of God's word in my hand. But let him not fight by proxy; let his coblers keep to their stalls; let his tinkers mend their brazen vessels; let his barbers confine themselves to their blocks and basons; let his blacksmiths blow more suitable coals than those of nice controversy: every man in his own order." And, because Olivers had been a shoemaker, he attacked him on that score with abusive ridicule, both in prose and

in rhyme.* But when he spoke of Wesley himself, and Wesley's doctrines, it was with a bitterer temper. The very titles which he affixed to his writings were in the manner of Martin Marprelate,—"More Work for Mr. John Wesley;"—"An Old Fox tarred and feathered:" it seemed as

* He makes Wesley speak of him thus, in a doggrel dialogue:

I've Thomas Oliver, the cobler,
(No stall in England holds a nobler,)
A wight of talents universal,
Whereof I'll give a brief rehearsal:
He wields, beyond most other men,
His awl, his razor, and his pen;
My beard he shaves, repairs my shoe,
And writes my panegyric too;
He, with one brandish of his quill,
Can knock down Toplady and Hill;
With equal ease, whene'er there's need,
Can darn my stockings and my creed;
Can drive a nail, or ply the needle,
Hem handkerchief, and scrape the fiddle;
Chop logic as an ass chews thistle,
More skilfully than you can whistle;
And then, when he philosophizes,
No son of Crispin half so wise is.
Of all my ragged regiment,
This cobler gives me most content;
My forgeries and faith's defender,
My barber, champion, and shoe-mender.

In private, however, Toplady did justice to this antagonist. After a chance interview with him, which, for its good humour, was creditable to both parties, he says, to a correspondent, "To say the truth, I am glad I saw Mr. Olivers, for he appears to be a person of stronger sense, and better behaviour, than I imagined. Had his understanding been cultivated by a liberal education, I believe he would have made some figure in life." I have never seen Olivers's pamphlet, but he had the right side of the argument; and, if he had not maintained his cause with respectable ability, his treatise would not have been sanctioned (on such an occasion) by Wesley, and praised by Fletcher.

if he had imbibed the spirit of sectarian scurrility, from the truculent libellers of the puritanical age, with whom he sympathized almost as much in opinions as in temper. Blunders and blasphemies, he said, were two species of commodities in which Mr. Wesley had driven a larger traffic, than any other blunder-merchant this country had produced. Considered as a reasoner, he called him one of the most contemptible writers that ever set pen to paper. And "abstracted from all warmth, and from all prejudices," says he, "I believe him to be the most rancorous hater of the Gospel system that ever appeared in this island." The same degree of coolness and impartiality appeared when he spoke of the doctrines which he opposed. He insisted that Socinus and Arminius were the two necessary supporters of a free-willer's coat of arms; "for," said he, in his vigorous manner, "Arminianism is the head, and Socinianism the tail of one and the self-same serpent; and, when the head works itself in, it will soon draw the tail after it." A tract of Wesley's, in which the fatal doctrine of Necessity is controverted and exposed, he calls "the famous Moorfields powder, whose chief ingredients are an equal portion of gross Heathenism, Pelagianism, Mahometanism, Popery, Manichæism, Ranterism, and Antinomianism, culled, dried, and pulverized, and mingled with as much palpable Atheism as you can scrape together." And he asserted, and attempted to prove, that Arminianism and Atheism came to the same thing. A more unfair reasoner has seldom entered the lists of theolo-

gical controversy, and yet he was not so uncharitable as his writings, nor by any means so bad as his opinions might easily have made him. He much questioned whether an Arminian could go to heaven; and of course must have supposed that Wesley, as the Arch-Arminian of the age, bore about him the stamp of reprobation. Nevertheless, in one of his letters, he says, "God is witness how earnestly I wish it may consist with the Divine will, to touch the heart and open the eyes of that unhappy man! I hold it as much my duty to pray for his conversion, as to expose the futility of his railings against the truths of the Gospel." And, upon a report of Wesley's death, he would have stopped the publication of one of his bitter diatribes, for the purpose of expunging whatever reflected with asperity upon the dead. There was no affectation in this; the letters in which these redeeming feelings appear were not intended or expected to go abroad into the world. The wise and gentle Tillotson has observed, that we shall have two wonders in heaven; the one, how many come to be absent whom we expected to find there; the other, how many are there whom we had no hope of meeting.

Toplady said of Mr. Fletcher's works, that, in the very few pages which he had perused, the serious passages were dulness double-condensed, and the lighter passages impudence double-distilled: "So hardened was" his own "front," to use one of his own expressions, "and so thoroughly was he drenched in the petrifying water of a

party." If ever true Christian charity was manifested in polemical writing, it was by Fletcher of Madeley. Even theological controversy never, in the slightest degree, irritated his heavenly temper. On sending the manuscript of his first Check to Antinomianism to a friend much younger than himself, he says, "I beg, as upon my bended knees, you would revise and correct it, and take off *quod durius sonat* in point of *works*, *reproof*, and *style*. I have followed my light, which is but that of smoking flax; put yours to mine. I am charged hereabouts with scattering fire-brands, arrows, and death. Quench some of my brands; blunt some of my arrows; and take off all my deaths, except that which I design for Antinomianism."—"For the sake of candour," he says, in one of his prefaces, "of truth, of peace,—for the Reader's sake, and, above all, for the sake of Christ, and the honour of Christianity, whoever ye are that shall next enter the lists against us, do not wire-draw the controversy, by uncharitably attacking our persons, and absurdly judging our spirits, instead of weighing our arguments, and considering the scriptures which we produce; nor pass over fifty solid reasons, and a hundred plain passages, to cavil about non-essentials, and to lay the stress of your answer upon mistakes, which do not affect the strength of the cause, and which we are ready to correct as soon as they shall be pointed out. I take the Searcher of hearts, and my judicious unprejudiced readers to witness, that, through the whole of this controversy, far from

concealing the most plausible objections, or avoiding the strongest arguments which are or may be advanced against our reconciling doctrine, I have carefully searched them out, and endeavoured to encounter them as openly as David did Goliah. Had our opponents followed this method, I doubt not but the controversy would have ended long ago, in the destruction of our prejudices, and in the rectifying of our mistakes. Oh! if we preferred the unspeakable pleasure of finding out the truth, to the pitiful honour of pleasing a party, or of vindicating our own mistakes, how soon would the useful fan of scriptural, logical, and brotherly controversy purge the floor of the Church! How soon would the light of truth, and the flame of love, burn the chaff of error, and the thorns of prejudice, with fire unquenchable!"

In such a temper did this saintly man address himself to the work of controversy; and he carried it on with correspondent candour, and with distinguished ability. His manner is diffuse, and the florid parts, and the unction, betray their French origin; but the reasoning is acute and clear; the spirit of his writings is beautiful, and he was master of the subject in all its bearings. His great object was to conciliate the two parties, and to draw the line between the Solifidian and Pelagian errors. For this purpose he composed a treatise, which he called an "Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism; or, Scripture Scales to weigh the gold of Gospel truth, and to balance a multitude of opposite scriptures." Herein he brought together,

side by side, the opposite texts, and showed how they qualified each other: the opinion which he inferred seems to correspond more nearly with that of Baxter than of any other divine. He traced, historically, the growth of both the extremes against which he contended. Luther, being an Augustinian monk, brought with him, from his convent, the favourite opinions of Augustine, to which he became the more attached, because * of the value which the Romanists affixed to their superstitious works, and the fooleries and abominations which had sprung from this cause. Most of the reformers, and more especially Calvin, took the same ground. The Jesuits, seeing their error, inclined the Romish church to the opposite extreme; and, after a while, Jansenius formed a Calvinistic party among the Catholics, while Arminius tempered the doctrine of the reformed churches. Antinomianism was the legitimate consequence on the one part, and Mr. Fletcher thought that the English clergy were tending toward Pelagianism on the other. His great object was to trim the balance, and, above all, to promote Christian charity and Christian union. "My regard for unity," said he, "recovers my drooping spirits, and adds new strength to my wasted body, (he was believed, at that time, to be in the last stage of a consumption); I stop at the brink of the grave, over which

* Thus the old author of Neonomianism Unmasked places "The Calvinian Society in Gracious-street, at the sign of the Geneva Arms, just opposite to the sign of Cardinal Bellarmine's Head, at the foot of the bridge that crosses Reformation River, that divides between the Protestant and Popish cantons."

I bend, and, as the blood oozing from my decayed lungs does not permit me vocally to address my contending brethren, by means of my pen I will ask them, if they can properly receive the holy *communion*, while they *wilfully* remain in *disunion* with their brethren, from whom controversy has needlessly parted them!" He was then about to leave England, for what appeared to be a forlorn hope of deriving benefit from his native air; but, before his departure, he expressed a desire of seeing those persons with whom he had been engaged in this controversy, that, "all doctrinal differences apart, he might testify his sincere regret for having given them the least displeasure, and receive from them some condescending assurance of reconciliation and good-will." All of them had not generosity enough to accept the invitation; they who did were edified, as well as affected, by the interview; and some of them, who had had no personal acquaintance with him before, "expressed the highest satisfaction," says his biographer, "at being introduced to the company of one whose air and countenance bespoke him fitted rather for the society of angels than the conversation of men." Upon the score of controversial offences, few men have ever had so little need to ask forgiveness.

When Mr. Fletcher offended his antagonists, it was not by any personalities, or the slightest breathing of a malicious spirit, but by the ironical manner in which he displayed the real nature of their monstrous doctrine. For his talents were of the quick

mercurial kind; his fancy was always active, and he might have held no inconsiderable rank, both as a humorous and as an empassioned writer, if he had not confined himself wholly to devotional subjects. But his happy illustrations had the effect of provoking his opponents. Mr. Wesley also, by the unanswerable manner in which he treated the Calvinistic question, drew upon himself the fierce resentment of a host of enemies. They were confounded, but they would not be convinced; and they assailed him with a degree of rancorous hatred, which, even in theological controversy, has never been exceeded. "He was as weak as he was vicious," they said: "he was like a monkey, an eel, or a squirrel, perpetually twisting and twining all manner of ways. There was little probity, or common honesty, discoverable in that man —that Arminian priest:—he was incapable of appreciating real merit; and his blasphemous productions were horror to the soul, and torture to the ear. And for his doctrine,—the cursed doctrine of free-will,—it was the most God-dishonouring and soul-distressing doctrine of the day; it was one of the prominent features of the Beast; it was the enemy of God, and the offspring of the wicked one; the insolent brat of hell. Arminianism was the spiritual pestilence which had given the Protestant churches the plague: like a mortal scorpion, it carries a sting in its tail, that affects with stupefaction, insensibility, and death, all whom it strikes."

The unforgivable offence, which drew upon

Wesley and his doctrine this sort of obloquy, with which volumes have been filled, was the sermon upon Free Grace, that had been the occasion of the breach with Whitefield. It is one of the most able and eloquent of all his discourses; a triumphant specimen of empassioned argument. "Call it by whatever name you please," said he, attacking the Calvinistic doctrine, "Election, Preterition, Predestination, or Reprobation, it comes to the same thing. The sense is plainly this: by virtue of an eternal, unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly damned; it being impossible that any of the former should be damned, or that any of the latter should be saved." He proceeded to show, that it made all preaching vain, as needless to the elect, and useless to the reprobate; and, therefore, that it could not be a doctrine of God, because it makes void his ordinance: that it tended to produce spiritual pride in some, absolute despair in others, and to destroy our zeal for good works: that it made revelation contradictory and useless; and that it was full of blasphemy,—"of such blasphemy," said he, "as I should dread to mention, but that the honour of our gracious God, and the cause of truth, will not suffer me to be silent. In the cause of God," he pursues, "and from a sincere concern for the glory of his great name, I will mention a few of the horrible blasphemies contained in this horrible doctrine. But first I must warn every one of you that hears, as ye will answer it at the great day, not to charge

me, as some have done, with blaspheming, because I mention the blasphemy of others. And the more you are grieved with them that do thus blaspheme, see. that ye 'confirm your love towards them' the more, and that your heart's desire, and continual prayer to God, be, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!'

"This premised, let it be observed, that this doctrine represents our blessed Lord, 'Jesus Christ, the righteous, the only-begotten son of the Father, full of grace and truth,' as an hypocrite, a deceiver of the people, a man void of common sincerity. For it cannot be denied that he every where speaks as if he were willing that all men should be saved; therefore, to say he was not willing that all men should be saved, is to represent him as a mere hypocrite and dissembler. It cannot be denied, that the gracious words which came out of his mouth are full of invitations to all sinners; to say, then, He did not *intend* to save all sinners, is to represent him as a gross deceiver of the people. You cannot deny that he says, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden!' If, then, you say He calls those that cannot come, those whom he knows to be unable to come, those whom he can make able to come but will not, how is it possible to describe greater insincerity? You represent him as mocking his helpless creatures, by offering what he never intends to give. You describe him as saying one thing and meaning another; as pretending the love which he had not. Him, in whose mouth was no guile, you

make full of deceit, void of common sincerity: then, especially when drawing nigh the city he wept over it, and said, 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!' (ἠθέλησα καὶ οὐκ ἠθελήσατε). Now, if you say *they would*, but *he would not*, you represent him (which who could hear!) as weeping crocodile tears over the prey which he had doomed to destruction!

"Such blasphemy this, as, one would think, might make the ears of a Christian to tingle! But there is yet more behind; for, just as it honours the Son, so doth this doctrine honour the Father. It destroys all his attributes at once: it overturns both his justice, mercy, and truth. Yes, it represents the Most Holy God as worse than the devil; as more false, more cruel, and more unjust. More false, because the devil, liar as he is, hath never said he willeth all mankind to be saved: more unjust, because the devil cannot, if he would, be guilty of such injustice as you ascribe to God, when you say, that God condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, for continuing in sin, which, for want of that grace *he will not* give them, they cannot avoid: and more cruel, because that unhappy spirit 'seeketh rest, and findeth none,' so that his own restless misery is a kind of temptation to him to tempt others. But God 'resteth in his high and holy place;' so that to suppose him out of his mere motion, of his pure will and pleasure, happy

as he is, to doom his creatures, whether they will or not, to endless misery, is to impute such cruelty to him, as we cannot impute even to the great enemy of God and man. It is to represent the Most High God (he that hath ears to hear, let him hear!) as more cruel, false, and unjust than the devil!

"This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the *horrible decree* of Predestination. And here I fix my foot. On this I join issue with every assertor of it. You represent God as worse than the devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust. But you say, you will prove it by scripture. Hold! What will you prove by scripture? that God is worse than the devil? It cannot be. Whatever that scripture proves, it never proves this: whatever be its true meaning, it cannot mean this. Do you ask what is its true meaning then? If I say, I know not, you have gained nothing; for there are many scriptures, the true sense whereof neither you nor I shall know, till death is swallowed up in victory. But this I know, better it were to say it had no sense at all, than to say it had such a sense as this. It cannot mean, whatever it mean beside, that the God of truth is a liar. Let it mean what it will, it cannot mean, that the Judge of all the world is unjust. No scripture can mean that God is not love, or that his mercy is not over all his works: that is, whatever it prove beside, no scripture can prove predestination.

"This is the blasphemy for which I abhor the

doctrine of Predestination; a doctrine, upon the supposition of which, if one could possibly suppose it for a moment, call it election, reprobation, or what you please, (for all comes to the same thing,) one might say to our adversary the devil, 'Thou fool, why dost thou roar about any longer? Thy lying in wait for souls is as needless and useless as our preaching. Hearest thou not, that God hath taken thy work out of thy hands, and that he doth it more effectually? Thou, with all thy principalities and powers, canst only so assault that we may resist thee, but he can irresistibly destroy both body and soul in hell! Thou canst only entice; but his unchangeable decree to leave thousands of souls in death, compels them to continue in sin, till they drop into everlasting burnings. Thou temptest; he forceth us to be damned, for we cannot resist his will. Thou fool! why goest thou about any longer, seeking whom thou mayest devour? Hearest thou not that God is the devouring lion, the destroyer of souls, the murderer of men? Moloch caused only children to pass through the fire, and that fire was soon quenched; or, the corruptible body being consumed, its torments were at an end; but God, thou art told, by his eternal decree, fixed before they had done good or evil, causes not only children of a span long, but the parents also, to pass through the fire of hell; that fire which never shall be quenched; and the body which is cast thereinto, being now incorruptible and immortal, will be ever consuming and never

consumed; but the smoke of their torment, because it is God's good pleasure, ascendeth up for ever.'

"Oh, how would the enemy of God and man rejoice to hear these things were so! How would he cry aloud, and spare not! How would he lift up his voice, and say, To your tents, O Israel! flee from the face of this God, or ye shall utterly perish. But whither will ye flee? Into heaven? He is there. Down to hell? He is there also. Ye cannot flee from an omnipresent, almighty tyrant. And whether ye flee or stay, I call heaven, his throne, and earth, his footstool, to witness against you: ye shall perish, ye shall die eternally! Sing, O hell, and rejoice, ye that are under the earth! for God, even the mighty God, hath spoken, and devoted to death thousands of souls, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Here, O death, is thy sting! They shall not, cannot escape, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Here, O grave, is thy victory! Nations yet unborn, or ever they have done good or evil, are doomed never to see the light of life, but thou shalt gnaw upon them for ever and ever. Let all those morning stars sing together, who fell with Lucifer, son of the morning! Let all the sons of hell shout for joy; for the decree is past, and who shall annul it?

"Yes! the decree is past; and so it was before the foundation of the world. But what decree? Even this: 'I will set before the sons of men life and death, blessing and cursing;' and 'the soul

that chooseth life shall live, as the soul that chooseth death shall die.' This decree, whereby whom God 'did foreknow, he did predestinate,' was indeed from everlasting: this, whereby all who suffer Christ to make them alive, are 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God,' now standeth fast, even as the moon, and the faithful witness in heaven; and when heaven and earth shall pass away, yet this shall not pass away, for it is as unchangeable and eternal as the being of God that gave it. This decree yields the strongest encouragement to abound in all good works and in all holiness; and it is a well-spring of joy, of happiness also, to our great and endless comfort. This is worthy of God. It is every way consistent with the perfection of his nature. It gives us the noblest view both of his justice, mercy, and truth. To this agrees the whole scope of the Christian Revelation, as well as all the parts thereof. To this Moses and all the prophets bear witness; and our blessed Lord and all his apostles. Thus Moses, in the name of his Lord, 'I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live.' Thus Ezekiel (to cite one prophet for all), 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die; the son shall not bear (eternally) the iniquity of the father. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.' Thus our blessed Lord, 'If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink!'

Thus his great apostle St. Paul, 'God commandeth all men, every where, to repent.' *All men, every where*; every man, in every place, without any exception, either of place or person. Thus St. James, 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.' Thus St. Peter, 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.' And thus St. John, 'if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father; and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.'

"O hear ye this, ye that forget God! ye cannot charge your death upon him. 'Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye.' — 'As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?'"

A history of Wesley's life would be imperfect, unless it contained this memorable passage, — the most remarkable and the most powerful in all his works. It exasperated, beyond measure, those who, in their own conceit, had taken out *their*

patent of election, and considered themselves, in Mr. Toplady's language, (himself one of the number,) as "kings *incog.*, travelling, disguised like pilgrims, to their dominions above." Even temperate Calvinists were shocked, and have said, that Mr. Wesley's "horrid appeal to all the devils in hell gave a sort of infernal tone to the controversy." It is, indeed, in a tremendous strain of eloquence, and shows with what indignation the preacher, in his zeal for God, and in his love for his fellow-creatures, regarded a doctrine so injurious to both. In an evil hour did the restless mind of man devise for itself the perilous question of fatalism; and, in a more unhappy one, was it introduced into Christian theology. The fathers of our church perceived the danger on both sides, and endeavoured to keep the golden mean. "All men," said they, "be to be monished, and chiefly preachers, that, in this high matter, they, looking on both sides, so attemper and moderate themselves, that neither they so preach the grace of God, that they take away thereby free-will, nor, on the other side, so extol free-will, that injury be done to the grace of God." And in the directions for preachers, which were set forth in the latter years of James I. it was enjoined, "that no preacher, of what title soever, under the degree of a bishop, or dean at the least, should, from thenceforth, presume to preach, in any popular auditory, deep points of predestination, election, reprobation, or of the universality, efficacy, resistibility, or irresistibility of God's grace; but

leave those themes rather to be handled by learned men, and that moderately and modestly, by way of use and application, rather than by way of positive doctrines, being fitter for the schools than for simple auditories." The puritans exclaimed against this prohibition, whereby, they said, man made that the forbidden fruit, which God appointed for the tree of life. But, upon this point, even the popes themselves, in the plenitude of their power, were not able to impose silence.

Wesley had once a whimsical proof of the horror with which the high-flying Calvinists regarded him. One afternoon, on the road from Newport-Pagnel to Northampton, "I overtook," says he, "a serious man, with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were; therefore I said nothing to contradict them. But that did not content him; he was quite uneasy to know whether I held the doctrine of the decrees as he did: but I told him, over and over, we had better keep to practical things, less we should be angry at one another. And so we did for two miles, till he caught me unawares, and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer, told me I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him 'no, I am John Wesley himself!' Upon which,

Improvisum aspris veluti qui sentibus anguem
Pressit,

he would gladly have run away outright; but being the better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side, and endeavoured to shew him his heart, till we came into the street of Northampton."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WESLEY'S CLERICAL COADJUTORS. — MR. GRIMSHAW. — DR. COKE. — THE GREEK BISHOP. — WESLEY'S CREDULITY.

A FEW years before this final and irreparable breach with the Calvinists, Wesley had attempted to form an open and active union between all such clergymen as have more recently arrogated to themselves the appellation of Evangelical, or Gospel ministers. With this hope he sent round a circular letter, to some fifty ministers of the Church of England, wherein he proposed that, leaving free the disputable points of predestination on one side, and perfection on the other; laying no stress upon expressions, and binding themselves to no peculiar discipline, but some remaining quite regular, others quite irregular; and others, again, partly the one and partly the other, they should think and speak kindly of each other, form, as it were, a defensive league, and each help the other on in his work, and enlarge his influence by all rightful means. If any thing more were meant by this than that each should occasionally accommodate the others with his pulpit, and that they should countenance his itinerant lay-preachers, the meaning is not obvious. On this occasion, also, Mr. Wesley looked for an omen, and relates, with

evident complacency, at the end of the letter, that, one of his friends having objected to him the impossibility of effecting such an union, he went up stairs, and, after a little prayer, opened Kempis on these words: *Expecta Dominum; viriliter age; noli diffidere; noli discedere; sed corpus et aninam expone constanter pro gloria Dei.*

The greater part of the methodizing clergy adhered to Lady Huntingdon's party in the dispute. Among those who remained attached to Mr. Wesley, Vincent Perronet, the vicar of Shoreham, was one, who was, either by birth or extraction, a Swiss, and who, in the Romish church, would have been beatified or canonized, for what, in mystical language, would be called his *rapts*, as well as for the uniform piety of his life. William Grimshaw, who held the perpetual curacy of Haworth, in one of the wildest parts of the West-Riding, was a more active associate. In his unconverted state, this person was certainly insane; and, had he given utterance at that time to the monstrous and horrible imaginations, which he afterwards revealed to his spiritual friends, he would deservedly have been sent to Bedlam. His change of mind, which was not till he had been ten years in holy orders, was preceded by what he supposed to be a miraculous impression upon his senses, and which may possibly have been an electrical* or

* Mr. Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, relates the fact from Grimshaw's own testimony. "At last the time of his deliverance came. At the house of one of his friends he lays his hand on a book, and opens it with his face towards a pewter shelf. Instantly his face

galvanic effect: and, in the course of his ministry, he was favoured with a vision in a trance; that is to say, he mistook* delirium for reality. He became, however, a very zealous parish priest; and his oddities, which procured him the name of Mad Grimshaw, did not prevent him from being very useful among a set of parishioners, who are said to have been as wild as the bleak barren country which they inhabited, and to have had little more sense of religion than their cattle.

The parish contained four hamlets, in each of which he made it a rule to preach three times a month, partly for the sake of the old and infirm, but chiefly for those who scarcely ever attended the church because of the distance. As he found that people were willing to hear him, he extended his preaching into his neighbours' parishes, without troubling himself to ask the consent of the minister, or caring whether he liked it or not. In this way he established two circuits of his own, which he went round every fortnight: in the more populous, he preached from four-and-twenty to thirty times in the week; and, in the other, about half as often, wherefore he called this his idle week.

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is saluted with an uncommon flash of heat. He turns to the title-page, and finds it to be Dr. Owen on Justification. Immediately he is surprised with such another flash. He borrows the book, studies it, is led into God's method of justifying the ungodly, hath a new heart given him, and now, behold, he prayeth!"

* The case seems to have been an apoplectic affection of the slightest kind: the detail may be seen in his life by Mr. Myles (p. 14), as given by himself to Mr. Williams, of Kidderminster. A more remarkable case of the same kind is noticed in the Quarterly Review, vol. x. pp. 117, 118.

While he was at home, he had a morning meeting for prayer and exhortation at his own house, at five o'clock in the summer, and at six in winter. At church he would stop in the midst of the prayers, if he saw any person inattentive, and rebuke the offender; and, while the psalms were singing before sermon, he would go out to see if any persons were idling in the church-yard, or in the street, or in the alehouses, and drive as many as he could find into the church before him. These were not the only means which he used for bringing his parishioners into order. Having taken up the dismal puritanical notion, that it is sinful to walk in the fields for recreation on the Sabbath day, he would set out himself, in order to reprove such persons as he detected in the fact. This odd humour led him also, like the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, in the Arabian Tales, to go out in disguise, and see in what manner his instructions were observed, and how far the people were, in reality, what they made themselves appear to him. Thus he went to the door of a great professor of charity, and begged a night's lodging, in the character of a poor man, and was turned away with abuse. And he teased a purblind woman, by touching her repeatedly with a stick, like a mischievous boy, till, taking him for one, and finding threats insufficient, she gave her tongue the reins, and began to swear. Neither of these were fair trials: but discretion was no part of his character. Such, however, was the effect which he produced by his zeal, his vigilance, and his real worth, that

a man who, being on his way for a midwife one Sunday, wanted his horse shod in the village, could not prevail upon the blacksmith to do the job, till they had gone together to Mr. Grimshaw, and he had granted permission, being satisfied of the necessity of the case. And it was believed, long after his death, that he had put a stop to the races at Haworth by his prayers, because, when he had often and vainly attempted to dissuade the people from subscribing and promoting these meetings, for the benefit of the publicans, he prayed at length that the Lord would be pleased to put a stop to the evil proceedings in his own way, a heavy rain during the whole three days spoiled the sport, and, after that time, the mischievous custom was not revived.

Grimshaw entered entirely into Mr. Wesley's views, acted as assistant in the circuit wherein he resided, and attended the Conference every third year, when it was held at Leeds. When Whitefield or Wesley came to visit him, a scaffold was erected for them in the church-yard, the church not being large enough to hold the concourse that assembled. Prayers, therefore, were read in the church, the preaching was in the open air, and the sacrament was afterwards administered to successive congregations, one church-full after another. Whitefield happened, in one of his sermons, to speak as if he believed his hearers had profited much by the exertions of the faithful pastor who had so long laboured among them: but Grimshaw stood up, and interrupted him immediately, saying, with a loud

voice, "Oh, Sir, for God's sake do not speak so! I pray you, do not flatter them: I fear the greater part of them are going to hell with their eyes open." His admiration of the itinerants was very great; his house was their home, they preached in his kitchen, and he always gave notice at church when this was to be; and, that their flock might not be scattered after his death, when a more regular and less zealous minister should succeed him, he built a chapel and dwelling-house at his own expence, and settled it upon the Methodist plan. He not only received the preachers as his guests, but as many visitors as his house would hold; giving up his own bed, and sleeping, unknown to them, in the hay-loft. No office appeared to him too humble on such occasions, — no mark of respect too great for a successful preacher of the Gospel. He was once found cleaning the boots of an itinerant: once he embraced a preacher after his sermon, and said, "the Lord bless thee, Ben, this is worth a hundred of my sermons!" and he fell down before another, saying, he was not worthy to stand in his presence. The only son of this singular man was educated at Kingswood, and became a drunkard, "notwithstanding he had been favoured with a religious education," says his father's biographer, "and had been prayed for by some of the holiest men in the land." The severe and injudicious system under which he had suffered at school, and the eccentricities which he had seen at home, may easily explain the wonder. The poor fellow, how-

ever, had a sense of his own worthlessness and degeneracy; and when he was riding home, in a state of intoxication, would sometimes say to his horse, the one which Grimshaw had ridden upon his circuits, "Once *thou carried* a saint, but now thou carriest a devil." Disease and strong pain, the bitter consequences of his course of life, brought him to repentance and to the grave; and some of his last words were, "what will my father say, when he sees that I am got to heaven!"

Of the few clergymen who entered into Mr. Wesley's views, and heartily co-operated with him, Mr. Grimshaw was the most eccentric; Mr. Fletcher the most remarkable for intellectual powers; the one who entered most entirely into the affairs of the Society was Thomas Coke. This person, who held so distinguished a place among the Methodists, and by whose unwearied zeal, and indefatigable exertions, that spirit, which Mr. Wesley had kindled in England, was extended to the remotest parts of the world, was born at Brecknock, in the year 1747, the only child of respectable and wealthy parents. The father died during his childhood, and the youth, in his seventeenth year, was entered as a gentleman commoner at Jesus' College, Oxford. He escaped from the university with fewer vices than in those days were generally contracted there; but he brought away a taint of that philosophistical infidelity which was then beginning to infect half-learned men. The works of Bishop Sherlock reclaimed him: he entered into holy orders, and being in expectation of some

considerable preferment, took out his degree of doctor of laws. The disappointment which he experienced from certain persons in power, to whom he had looked as patrons, was of little consequence to him, being possessed of a fair patrimony. He accepted the curacy of South-Petherton, in Somersetshire, and entered upon the duties of his office with more than ordinary zeal. His preaching soon filled the church; more room was wanting for the congregation; and, as the vestry would not be persuaded to erect a gallery, he built one at his own expense. This, and the style of his discourses, raised a suspicion that he was inclined to Methodism. The growing inclination was strengthened by conversation with Maxfield, who happened then to be residing in the neighbourhood, and confirmed by the perusal of * Alleine's Alarum to the Unconverted. He now preached extemporaneously, established evening lectures, and introduced hymns into the church; but, by thus going on faster than the parishioners were prepared to follow, he excited a strong spirit of opposition; complaints against him were preferred to the bishop and to the rector: the former merely admonished him; by the latter he was dismissed in a manner which seems to have been studiously

* "A book, which multitudes will have cause for ever to be thankful for," says Calamy. "No book in the English tongue (the Bible excepted) can equal it for the number that hath been dispersed; for there have been 20,000 of them printed and sold under the title of the Call, or Alarum to the Unconverted, in 8vo. or 12mo.; and 50,000 of the same book have been sold under the title of the Sure Guide to Heaven, 30,000 of which were at one impression."—Account of the Ejected Ministers, vol. ii. 577.

disrespectful, before the people publicly, on the Sabbath day: and his enemies had the indecency to chime him out of the church. These insults roused his Welsh blood, and he determined, with more spirit than prudence, to take his stand near the church on the two following Sundays, and preach to the people when they came out, for the purpose of vindicating himself, gratifying his adherents, and exhorting his opponents to repentance. These, who were probably the more numerous, were so provoked at this, that they collected stones, for the purpose of pelting him, on his second exhibition; and the Doctor would hardly have escaped, without some serious injury, if a young lady and her brother, whom the people knew and respected, had not placed themselves one on each side of him. He now took the earliest opportunity of being introduced to Wesley. The latter soon came into Somersetshire in his rounds, and thus notices the meeting in his Journal: "Here I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late a gentleman commoner of Jesus College, in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose to meet me. I had much conversation with him; and an union then began which, I trust, shall never end."

This was in the year 1776. Dr. Coke immediately became a member of the Methodist society, and was soon regarded as the most efficient of all Mr. Wesley's fellow-labourers. Having wholly given himself up to the Connection, the second place in it was naturally assigned to him; no other of its active members was possessed of equal fortune and rank in society; and all that he

had, his fortune, to every shilling, and his life, to every minute that could be employed in active exertions, were devoted to its interests. He was now considered as Mr. Wesley's more immediate representative; and, instead of being stationed, like the other preachers, in a circuit, he travelled, like Mr. Wesley, as a general inspector, wherever his presence was thought needful. In Ireland, more particularly, he visited the Societies alternately with Mr. Wesley, so that an annual visitation was always made. Before Mr. Wesley became acquainted with Dr. Coke, Mr. Fletcher had been looked to as the fittest person to act as his coadjutor, and succeed to as much of his authority as could be deputed to any successor. But Mr. Fletcher shrunk from the invidious distinction, and from the difficulties of the task: he had found his place, and knew where he could be most usefully employed for others, and most happily for himself.

The want of clerical assistants had been severely felt by Wesley. Notwithstanding his attachment to the Church of England, and his desire not only to continue in union with it himself, but to preserve his people from forming a schism, the tendency to separation became every year more apparent, from various causes, of which some were incidental, but others arose inevitably from the system which he had established. A hostile feeling toward the Church was retained by the dissenters who united themselves to the Methodists: these proselytes were not numerous, but they leavened the society. It is likely too, that, as

Methodism began to assume consistency and importance, just at the time when the Non-jurors were on the point of dissolution, a considerable proportion of that party would rather ally themselves with it, than with the sectarians or the Establishment; and these persons also would bring with them an unfavourable disposition toward the church. But the main cause is obviously to be found in the growing influence of the lay-preachers, their jealousy of the few clergymen who acted with them, their natural desire of placing themselves upon a level with the ministers of other denominations, and the disrespect with which the Establishment began to be regarded by most of those persons who preferred the preaching at the chapel to that in the church. And though Wesley often and earnestly warned them against this, neither his language nor his conduct were at all times consistent. In controversy, and in self-defence, he was sometimes led to speak of the unworthy ministers of the Establishment in terms of indignation, not considering that his remarks would be generally applied by many of his followers.

The growing desire of the itinerants to raise themselves in rank, and of the societies to have the sacrament administered by their own preachers, induced Wesley, who, in the continual bustle of his life, sometimes acted without due consideration, to take the strange means of obtaining orders for some of his lay-assistants from a Greek, who called himself Erasmus, and appeared in London with the title of Bishop of Arcadia. This measure was, in every point of view, injudicious.

Charles was decidedly hostile to it, and would never allow the preachers who had been thus ordained to assist him at the communion table. Staniforth was one; and he found it so invidious among his colleagues, that he never thought proper to exercise the ministerial functions. On the other hand, some, both of the local and itinerant preachers, coveted the distinction, and prevailed upon the obliging bishop to lay his hands upon them, without Mr. Wesley's consent. Displeased at this disregard of his authority, he acted with his wonted decision, and at once excluded from the Connection those who would not forego the powers with which they supposed themselves to be invested. It was doubtful whether this Erasmus * was what he pretended to be; and the whole transaction gave

* Toplady saw a certificate given by this vagrant, as he calls him, to the persons whom he pretended to ordain. It confirmed him in his opinion that the man was an impostor, because it was written not in the modern Greek, but in the antient, and of a very mean sort. This is the translation: "Our measure from the grace, gift, and power of the all-holy and life-giving Spirit, given by our Saviour Jesus Christ to his divine and holy apostles, to ordain sub-deacons and deacons, and also to advance to the dignity of a priest! Of this grace, which hath descended to our humility, I have ordained sub-deacon and deacon, at Snow-fields Chapel, on the 19th day of Nov. 1764, and at West-street Chapel, on the 24th of the same month, priest, the Rev. Mr. W. C., according to the rules of the holy apostles and of our faith. Moreover, I have given to him power to minister and teach, in all the world, the gospel of Jesus Christ, no one forbidding him in the church of God. Wherefore, for that very purpose, I have made this present letter of recommendation from our humility, and have given it to the ordained Mr. W. C. for his certificate and security.

"Given and written at London, in Britain, Nov. 24. 1764.

"ERASMUS, Bishop of Arcadia."

Mr. Nightingale says, that enquiry concerning him was made of the patriarch of Smyrna, and that it appeared he really was Bishop of Arcadia, in Crete.

Wesley's enemies an opportunity of attacking him, which they did not fail to use. They charged him with having violated the oath of supremacy, by thus inducing a foreign prelate to exercise acts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction within this realm; and they alleged that he had even pressed the Greek to consecrate him a bishop also, that he might then ordain what Ministers he pleased. Erasmus was said to have refused, because, according to the canons of the Greek Church, more than one bishop must be present to assist at the consecration of a new one. Charles Wesley was even accused, in the Gospel Magazine, of having offered the Greek forty guineas if he would perform the ceremony. This is palpably false; nothing can be so incredible as that Charles Wesley would have made such an offer, except that a bishop of Arcadia in London should have refused it. The charge of simony is, beyond all doubt, purely calumnious, in the spirit of that slander which the Gospel Magazine breathed in all its numbers. But there seems reason to believe that Wesley was willing to have been episcopized upon this occasion.

Both brothers retained the fancy of baptizing by immersion, after they had out-grown many other eccentricities; and Wesley followed this mode sometimes in condescension to the whims of others, when he had ceased to attach any importance to it, and must have perceived the exceeding inconvenience of the practice. One of the charges which the virulent Toplady brought against him was, that of having immersed a certain Lydia Sheppard, in a bathing tub, in a cheesemonger's cellar, in

Spitalfields, and holding her so long under water, while he deliberately pronounced the words of administration, that she was almost insensible when she was taken out. The story was related on her own authority, which probably was not the best in the world. But Wesley's course of life brought him into contact with persons under every disease of mind, and in all the intermediate stages between madness and roguery. Crazy people, indeed, found their way to him as commonly as they used to do to court, though with less mischievous intentions. They generally went in a spirit of pure kindness, to enlighten him, and correct his errors.

Two ignorant dreamers, while the French prophets had a party in this country, called upon him at the Foundry, saying, they were sent from God to inform him, that very shortly he should be *born'd* again; and they added, that they would stay in the house till it was done, unless he turned them out. Wesley knew how to deal with such prophets as these: he assured them that he would not turn them out, showed them into the Society room, and left them to themselves. "It was tolerably cold," he says, "and they had neither meat nor drink." There, however, they sate from morning till evening, then quietly walked off, and troubled him with their company no more.

A woman came to him one day, with a message from the Lord, she said, to tell him he was laying up treasures on earth, taking his ease, and minding only eating and drinking. "I told her," says he, "God knew me better; and if he had sent her, it would have been with a more proper message."

The idle notion, that he was enriching himself, prevailed among persons who might easily have known better. He received a letter from the Board of Excise, telling him the commissioners could not doubt but that he had plate, for which he had neglected to make an entry, and requiring him immediately to make a proper return. His answer was, "Sir, I have two silver tea-spoons at London, and two at Bristol: this is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more, while so many round me want bread."

In the beginning of his career, Wesley perceived that there was more danger of the growth of infidelity than of superstition; and this opinion was confirmed by his after-experience. He discovered, in the beautiful vale of Lorton, that Deism had found its way into the heart of the Cumbrian mountains; and near Manchester he found, what he had never heard of in England, a whole clan of infidel peasants, who had been scoffed and argued out of their belief, by the vulgar ribaldry and impudent ignorance of an alehouse-keeper. Of the persons whom he met with in this unhappy state of mind, some were contented to live without God in the world, and be as the beasts that perish, as if they had succeeded in annihilating their diviner part. But others confessed the misery of wandering in doubt and darkness. One who, having been a zealous Romanist, had cast off Popery and Christianity together, said to him, "I know there is a God, and I believe him to be the soul of all, *the anima mundi*; if he be not rather, as I sometimes think, the Το Παν the whole *compages* of body and

spirit every where diffused. But farther than this I know not; all is dark; my thought is lost. Whence I came, I know not; nor what, nor why, I am; nor whither I am going. But this I know, I am unhappy; I am weary of life; I wish it were at an end."

For men in this pitiable state Wesley was an excellent physician, and he had not unfrequently the satisfaction of knowing, that his advice was not given in vain. He himself had gone through this stage of doubt in early life, and has described the perplexity of his mind with great force and feeling. "After carefully heaping up," he says, "the strongest arguments which I could find, either in ancient or modern authors, for the very being of a God, and (which is nearly connected with it) the existence of an invisible world, I have wandered up and down musing with myself, what if all these things which I see around me, this earth and heaven, this universal frame, have existed from eternity? What if that melancholy supposition of the old poet be the real case.

Οιη περ φυλλων γενεη τοιηδε και ανδρων.

What if the generation of men be exactly parallel with the generation of leaves, if the earth drop its successive inhabitants, just as the tree drops its leaves? What if that saying of a great man be really true, *Post mortem nihil est, et ipsa mors nihil.* Death is nothing, and nothing is after death. How am I sure that this is not the case? that I have not 'followed cunningly-devised fables?' And I have pursued the thought till there was no spirit

in me, and I was ready to choose strangling rather than life." *

On the other hand, there could not be a more dangerous counsellor for persons with a certain tendency to derangement, for he seems always to have delighted to believe extraordinary things which he ought to have doubted, and to have encouraged sallies of enthusiasm which he ought to have repressed. Thus, speaking of a lady who exhibited before him her gift of extempore prayer, he says, "such a prayer I never heard before; it was perfectly an original; odd and unconnected, made up of disjointed fragments, and yet like a flame of fire: every sentence went through my heart, and I believe the heart of every one present. For many months I have found nothing like it. It was good for me to be here." And again, after a second performance, he reasons upon the case, "Is not this an instance of ten thousand, of God's choosing the foolish things of the world to confound the wise? Here is one that has not only a weak natural understanding, but an impetuosity of tem-

* Wesley introduced a remarkable passage of this kind in one of his sermons. "The devil," said he, "once infused into my mind a temptation that, perhaps, I did not believe what I was preaching. 'Well, then,' said I, 'I will preach it till I do.' But, the devil suggested, 'what if it should not be true?' 'Still,' I replied, 'I will preach it, because, whether true or not, it must be pleasing to God, by preparing men better for another world.' 'But what if there should be no other world?' rejoined the Enemy. 'I will go on preaching it,' said I, 'because it is the way to make them better and happier in this.'" This passage is not in Mr. Wesley's works, but I relate it, with perfect confidence, on the authority of the late Dr. Estlin, of Bristol, who heard him preach the sermon, and whom I will not thus cursorily mention, without an expression of respectful remembrance.

per, bordering upon madness. And hence both her sentiments are confused, and her expressions odd and indigested; and yet, notwithstanding this, more of the real power of God attends these uncouth expressions, than the sensible discourses of even good men, who have twenty times her understanding." The wonder would have ceased, if he had reflected upon the state of mind in the recipients.

Here he was the dupe of his own devout emotions, which, in a certain mood, might as well have been excited by the music of an organ, or the warbling of a sky-lark. But he was sometimes imposed upon by relations which were worthy to have figured in the Acta Sanctorum. One of his preachers pretended to go through the whole service of the meeting in his sleep, exhorting, singing, and preaching, and even discoursing with a clergyman, who came in and reasoned with him during his exhibition, and affecting, in the morning, to know nothing of what he had done during the night. And Wesley could believe this, and ask seriously by what principle of philosophy it was to be explained! He believed also that a young woman, having received a strong impulse to call sinners to repentance, was inwardly told, that if she would not do it willingly, she should do it whether she would or not: that from that time she became subject to fits, in which she always imagined herself to be preaching; and that having cried out at last, Lord, I will obey thee, I will call sinners to repentance, and begun to preach in

consequence, the fits left her. In the history of this remarkable man, nothing is more remarkable than his voracious credulity. He accredited and repeated stories of apparitions, and witchcraft, and possession, so silly, as well as monstrous, that they might have nauseated the coarsest appetite for wonder; this, too, when the belief on his part was purely gratuitous, and no motive can be assigned for it, except the pleasure of believing. The state of mind is more intelligible, which made him ascribe a supernatural importance to the incidents that befel him, whether merely accidental, or produced by any effort of his own. Strong fancy, and strong prepossession, may explain this, without ascribing too much to the sense of his own importance. If he escaped from storms at sea, it appeared to him that the tempest abated, and the waves fell, because his prayers were heard. If he was endangered in travelling, he was persuaded that angels, both evil and good, had a large share in the transaction. "The old murderer," he says, "is restrained from hurting me, but he has power over my horses." A panic seized the people, in a crowded meeting, while he was preaching upon the slave trade: it could not be accounted for, he thought, without supposing some preternatural influence: "Satan fought, lest his kingdom should be delivered up." If, in riding over the mountains in Westmorland, he sees rain behind him and before, and yet escapes between the showers, the natural circumstance appears to him to be an especial interference in his favour. Preaching in

the open air, he is chilled, and the sun suddenly comes forth to warm him: the heat becomes too powerful, and forthwith a cloud is interposed. So, too, at Durham, when the sun shone with such force upon his head, that he was scarcely able to speak, "I paused a little," he says, "and desired God would provide me a covering, if it was for his glory. In a moment it was done; a cloud covered the sun, which troubled me no more. Ought voluntary humility to conceal this palpable proof, that God still heareth the prayer?" At another time the sun, while he was officiating, shone full in his face, but it was no inconvenience; nor were his eyes more dazzled, than if it had been under the earth. Labouring under indisposition, when he was about to administer the sacrament, the thought, he says, came into his mind, "why should he not apply to God at the beginning, rather than the end of an illness?" He did so, and found immediate relief. By an effort of faith he could rid himself of the tooth-ache: and more than once, when his horse fell lame, and there was no other remedy, the same application was found effectual. "Some," he observes, "will esteem this a most notable instance of enthusiasm: be it so or not, I aver the plain fact."

This was Wesley's peculiar weakness, and he retained it to the last. Time and experience taught him to correct some of his opinions, and to moderate others, but this was rooted in his nature. In the year 1780, he began to publish the Arminian Magazine, for the double purpose of

maintaining and defending those doctrines which were reviled with such abominable scurrility by the Calvinists in their monthly * journal, and of supplying his followers, who were not in the habit of reading much, with an entertaining and useful miscellany. Both purposes were well answered; but having this means at his command, he indulged his indiscriminate credulity, and inserted, without scruple, and without reflection, any marvellous tale that came to his hands.

* In the Preface to the first volume he says, "Amidst the multitude of magazines which now swarm in the world, there was one, a few years ago, termed The Christian Magazine, which was of great use to mankind, and did honour to the publishers; but it was soon discontinued, to the regret of many serious and sensible persons. In the room of it started up a miscreated phantom, called The Spiritual Magazine; and, not long after it, its twin sister, oddly called The Gospel Magazine. Both of these are intended to show, that God is not loving to every man; that his mercy is not over all his works; and, consequently, that Christ did not die for us all, but for one in ten, for the elect only.

"This comfortable doctrine, the sum of which, proposed in plain English, is, God, before the foundation of the world, absolutely and irrevocably decreed, that 'some men shall be saved, do what they will, and the rest damned, do what they can,' has, by these tracts, been spread throughout the land with the utmost diligence. And these champions of it have, from the beginning, proceeded in a manner worthy of their cause. They have paid no more regard to good-nature, decency, or good manners, than to reason or truth: all these they set utterly at defiance. Without any deviation from their plan, they have defended their dear decrees, with arguments worthy of Bedlam, and with language worthy of Billingsgate."

These were the first religious journals which were published in England. Since that time every denomination of dissenters, down to the most insignificant subdivisions of schism, has had its magazine.

CHAPTER XXVII.

METHODISM IN AMERICA.—WESLEY'S POLITICAL CONDUCT.

A LITTLE modification might have rendered Methodism a most useful auxiliary to the English Church. But if some such auxiliary power was needed in this country, much more was it necessary in British America, where the scattered state of the population was as little favourable to the interests of religion as of government.

In the New-England states, the Puritans had established a dismal tyranny of the priesthood; time and circumstances had mitigated it; and ecclesiastical discipline, in those provinces, seems nearly to have reached its desirable mean about the middle of the eighteenth century: the elders no longer exercised an impertinent and vexatious controul over their countrymen; they retained, however, a wholesome influence; the means of religious instruction were carefully provided, and the people were well trained up in regular and pious habits. Too little attention had been paid to this point in the other states; indeed it may be said, that the mother-country, in this respect, had grossly * neglected one of its first and most im-

* Franklin gives a curious anecdote upon this subject in one of his letters. "The reverend commissary Blair, who projected the college

portant duties toward its colonies. There were many parts in the southern states, of which the frightful picture given of them by Secker, when bishop of Oxford, was not overcharged. "The first European inhabitants," said that prelate, "too many of them, carried but little sense of Christianity abroad with them. A great part of the rest suffered it to wear out gradually, and their children grew, of course, to have yet less than they, till, in some countries, there were scarce any footsteps of it left beyond the mere name. No teacher was known, no religious assembly was held; the sacrament of baptism not administered for near twenty years together, nor that of the Lord's Supper for near sixty, amongst many thousands of people, who did not deny the obligation of these duties, but lived, nevertheless, in a stupid neglect of them." To remedy this, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel sent out missionaries from time to time; but misdirecting their exertions, for want of proper enquiry, or proper information, they employed most of the few labourers

in the province of Virginia, and was in England to solicit benefactions and a charter, relates that the queen (Mary), in the king's absence, having ordered the Attorney-General (Seymour) to draw up the charter which was to be given, with 2000*l.* in money, he opposed the grant, saying, that the nation was engaged in an expensive war, that the money was wanted for better purposes, and he did not see the least occasion for a college in Virginia. Blair represented to him, that its intention was to educate and qualify young men to be ministers of the Gospel, much wanted there; and begged Mr. Attorney would consider, that the people of Virginia had souls to be saved as well as the people of England. *Souls!* said he, *damn your souls! make tobacco!*".

Correspondence, vol. i. p. *158*.

whom they could find in the states where they were least wanted, and in places where they did little more than interfere with what was the established system.

Whitefield had contented himself with the immediate impression which he produced. The person who first began to organize Methodism in America was an Irishman, by name Philip Embury, who had been a local preacher in his own country. Having removed to New-York, he collected a few hearers, first in his own house, and, when their number increased, in a large room, which they rented for the purpose. Captain Webb happened at this time to be in America. This officer, who had lost an eye in the battle of Quebec, had been converted, not long after that event, by Mr. Wesley's preaching at Bristol, and had tried his own talents as a preacher at Bath, when some accident prevented the itinerant from arriving, whom the congregation had assembled to hear. Webb hearing of Embury's beginning, paid him a visit from Albany, where he then held the appointment of barrack-master, preached in his uniform, attracted auditors by the novelty of such an exhibition, and made proselytes by his zeal. A regular society was formed in the year 1768, and they resolved to build a preaching-house.

Wesley's attention had already been invited to America. He met with a Swedish chaplain, who had spent several years in Pennsylvania, and who entreated that he would send out preachers to help him, representing what multitudes in that

country were as sheep without a shepherd. Soon afterwards Captain Webb and his associates wrote to Mr. Wesley, informing him that a beginning had been made, and requesting that he would, at the ensuing Conference, appoint some persons to come over, and prosecute the work which was so providentially begun. About the same time there came a letter from a certain Thomas Bell, at Charlestown, saying, "Mr. Wesley says, the first message of the preachers is to the lost sheep of England. And are there none in America? They have strayed from England into the wild woods here, and they are running wild after this world. They are drinking their wine in bowls, and are jumping and dancing, and serving the devil, in the groves and under the green trees. And are not these lost sheep? And will none of the preachers come here? Where is Mr. Brownfield? Where is John Pawson? Where is Nicholas Manners? are they living, and will they not come?"

Pawson would not go; because, he said, he did not see that it could be his duty to leave his parents, who were then on the brink of the grave. He followed his heart in this, and was right. Pawson, indeed, was in his proper sphere; the fire of enthusiasm in him had settled into a steady vital heat, and there were younger men for the work. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pillmoor, volunteered at the next Conference for the service; and as the New-York Methodists had contracted a debt by their building, the Connection sent them fifty pounds by these preachers, as a token of brotherly

love. They landed at Philadelphia, where Captain Webb had already formed a society of about an hundred members. Pillmoor proceeded to Maryland and Virginia, Boardman to New-York: both sent home flattering accounts of their success, and of the prospect before them; so that Wesley himself began to think of following them: "but," said he, "the way is not plain; I wait till Providence shall speak more clearly on one side or the other." In 1771 he says, "my call to America is not yet clear. I have no business there, as long as they can do without me: at present I am a debtor to the people of England and Ireland, and especially to them that believe." That year, therefore, he sent over Richard Wright and Francis Asbury, the latter of whom proved not inferior to himself in zeal, activity, and perseverance. Asbury perceived that his ministry was more needed in the villages and scattered plantations than in large towns, and he therefore devoted himself to country-service. In 1773, Thomas Rankin and George Shadford were sent to assist their brethren: by this time they had raised a few recruits among the Americans, and, holding a Conference at Philadelphia, it appeared by their muster-rolls, that there were about a thousand members in the different societies.

These preachers produced a considerable effect; and Methodism would have increased even more rapidly than in England, if its progress had not been interrupted by the rebellion. At the commencement of the disputes, which led to that un-

happy and ill-managed contest, Mr. Wesley was disposed to doubt whether the measures of government were defensible: but when the conduct of the revolutionists became more violent, and their intentions were unmasked, he saw good cause for altering his opinion, and published A Calm Address to the Americans, examining the question, whether the English parliament had power to tax the colonies. In this little pamphlet he pursued the same chain of reasoning as Dr. Johnson had done, and maintained, that the supreme power in England had a legal right of laying any tax upon them, for any end beneficial to the whole empire. The right of taxation, he argued, rested upon the same ground as the right of legislation: and the popular argument, that every freeman consented to the laws by which he was governed, was a mere fallacy. A very small part of the people were concerned in making laws; that business could only be done by delegation; those who were not electors had manifestly no part; and of those who were, when their votes were nearly equally divided, the minority were governed, not only without, but against their own consent. So much with regard to the laws which were enacted in their own times; and how could it be said that any man had consented to those which were made before he was born? In fact, consent to the laws was purely passive, and no other kind of consent was allowed by the condition of civil life. The Americans had not forfeited the rights of their forefathers, but they could no longer exercise them. They were

the descendents of men who either had no votes, or who had resigned them by emigration. They had, therefore, exactly what their ancestors left them; not a vote in making laws, nor in choosing legislators, but the happiness of being protected by laws, and the duty of obeying them. During the last war, they had been attacked by enemies whom they were not able to resist; they had been largely assisted, and, by that means, wholly delivered: the mother-country, desiring to be reimbursed for some part of the great expense she had incurred, laid on a small tax, and this reasonable and legal measure had set all America in a flame. How was it possible that such a cause should have produced such an effect?

"I will tell you," said Wesley. "I speak the more freely, because I am unbiassed. I have nothing to hope or fear on either side. I gain nothing, either by the government or by the Americans, and probably never shall; and I have no prejudice to any man in America: I love you as my brethren and countrymen. My opinion is this: we have a few men in England who are determined enemies to monarchy. Whether they hate his present majesty on any other ground than because he is a king, I know not; but they cordially hate his office, and have for some years been undermining it with all diligence, in hopes of erecting their grand idol, their dear commonwealth, upon its ruins. I believe they have let very few into their design (although many forward it, without knowing any thing of the matter); but they are steadily

pursuing it, as by various other means, so, in particular, by inflammatory papers, which are industriously and continually dispersed throughout the towns and country. By this method they have already wrought thousands of the people even to the pitch of madness. By the same, only varied according to your circumstances, they have likewise inflamed America. I make no doubt but these very men are the original cause of the present breach between England and her colonies. And they are still pouring oil into the flame, studiously incensing each against the other, and opposing, under a variety of pretences, all measures of accommodation. So that although the Americans, in general, love the English, and the English, in general, love the Americans, (all, I mean, that are not yet cheated and exasperated by these artful men,) yet the rupture is growing wider every day, and none can tell where it can end. These good men hope it will end in the total defection of North America from England. If this were effected, they trust the English in general would be so irreconcileably disgusted, that they should be able, with or without foreign assistance, entirely to overturn the government."

Mr. Wesley afterwards perceived, that the class of persons, whom he had here supposed to be the prime movers of this unhappy contest, were only aiders and abettors, and that the crisis had come on from natural causes. "I allow," said he, "that the Americans were strongly exhorted, by letters from England, 'never to yield, or lay down their

arms, till they had their own terms, which the government would be *constrained* to give them in a short time.' But those measures were concerted long before this,—long before either the tea-act, or the stamp-act, existed, only they were not digested into form. Forty years ago, when my brother was in Boston, it was the general language there, 'we must shake off the yoke; we never shall be a free people till we shake off the English yoke:' and the late acts of parliament were not the *cause* of what they have since done, but barely the occasion they laid hold on." That the American revolution must, in great part, be traced to the puritanical origin of the New England states, is indeed certain; but colonies are naturally republican, and when they are far distant, and upon a large scale, they tend necessarily, as well as naturally, to separation. Colonies will be formed with a view to this, when colonial policy shall be better understood. It will be acknowledged, that, when protection is no longer needed, dependence ceases to be desirable; and that, when a people can maintain and defend themselves, they are past their pupilage.

This address excited no little indignation among some of the English partisans of the Americans; and it produced a letter to Wesley from Mr. Caleb Evans, a baptist minister at Bristol, of considerable reputation in his own community. Wesley, who had neither leisure nor inclination for controversy, left the field to Mr. Fletcher, who again, on this occasion, seconded his friend with great ability

as well as zeal. "My reverence for God's word," said this good man, "my duty to the king, and regard for my friend; my love to injured truth, and the consciousness of the sweet liberty which I enjoy under the government, call for this little tribute of my pen; and I pay it so much the more cheerfully, as few men in the kingdom have had a better opportunity of trying which is most eligible, a republican government, or the mild-tempered monarchy of England. I lived more than twenty years the subject of two of the mildest republics of Europe: I have been, for above that number of years, the subject of your sovereign; and, from sweet experience, I can set my seal to this clause of the king's speech, at the opening of this session of parliament, 'to be a subject of Great Britain, with all its consequences, is to be the happiest subject of any civil government in the world.'"

Mr. Fletcher was no common controversialist: earnest sincerity, and devout ardour, were not more conspicuous in his writings, than the benevolence which appeared when he argued with most force and warmth, and the pure candour, and religious charity, which even his theological opponents felt and acknowledged. He, as well as Mr. Wesley, saw distinctly in what the principles of the American contest began, and in what they were likely to end. "If once legislation," he said, with Baxter, "(the chief act of government) be denied to be any part of government at all, and affirmed to belong to the people *as such*, who are *no* go-

vernors, all government will thereby be overthrown. Give me," he truly said, "Dr. Price's political principles, and I will move all kings out of their thrones, and all subjection out of the world." He rested the question upon religious grounds, and, on those grounds, argued against civil, as he had formerly done against ecclesiastical Antinomianism. The transition from one to the other, he said, was easy and obvious; for, as he that reverences the law of God, will naturally reverence the just commands of the king, so he that thinks himself free from the law of the Lord, will hardly think himself bound by the statutes of his sovereign. He traced the pestilent errors which were now again * beginning to prevail, after having, for more than a century, been subdued, to those seeds which had sprung up with the Lollards, and brought forth their full harvest at Munster.

* "All our danger at present," said he, "is from King Mob; and (pursuing Mr. Wesley's view of the subject) this danger is so much the greater, as *some* dissenters among us, who were quiet in the late reign, and thought themselves happy under the protection of the toleration-act, grow restless, begin openly to countenance their dissatisfied brethren in America, and make it a point of conscience to foment divisions in the kingdom. Whether they do it merely from a brotherly regard to the colonists, who chiefly worship God according to the dissenting plan, or whether they hope that a revolution on the continent would be naturally productive of a revolution in England; that a revolution in the state here would draw after it a revolution in the church; and that if the church of England were once shaken, the dissenting churches among us might raise themselves upon her ruins;—whether, I say, there is something of this under the cry of slavery and robbery which you set up, is a question (addressing himself to Mr. Caleb Evans) which, I said, in the preceding editions, you could determine far better than I: but now I recall it, because, though I may consider that part of the controversy in that unfavourable light, as a *politician*, yet, as a *Christian*, I ought to think and hope the best."

He prest upon his opponent, as a Christian, those texts of Scripture which enjoin the duty of submission to established authorities; and, as a Calvinist, the articles of Calvin's confession of faith, wherein that duty is expressly recognized. "We believe that God will have the world to be governed by laws and civil powers, that the lawless inclinations of men may be curbed; and therefore he has established kingdoms and republics, and other sorts of governments, (some hereditary, and some otherwise,) together with whatsoever belongs to judicature; and He will be acknowledged the author of government. We ought, then, not only to bear, for his sake, that rulers should have dominion over us, but it is also our bounden duty to honour them, and to esteem them worthy of all reverence, considering them as God's lieutenants and officers, which He has commissioned to execute a lawful and holy commission. We maintain, therefore, that we are bound to obey their laws and statutes, to pay tribute, taxes, and other duties, and to bear the yoke of subjection freely and with good will; and, therefore, we detest the men who reject superiorities, introduce community and confusion of property, and overthrow the order of justice. — Sir," he continued, applying the *argumentum ad hominem* to his opponent, "you are a Calvinist; you follow the French reformer, when he teaches the absolute reprobation, and unavoidable damnation of myriads of poor creatures yet unborn. Oh, forsake him not when he follows Christ, and teaches that God (not the people) is

to be acknowledged the author of power and government, and that we are bound to bear cheerfully, for his sake, the yoke of scriptural subjection to our governors! Be entreated, Sir, to rectify your false notions of liberty. The liberty of Christians and Britons does not consist in bearing no yoke, but in bearing a yoke made easy by a gracious Saviour and a gracious sovereign. A John of Leyden may promise to make us first lawless, then legislators and kings; and, by his delusive promises, he may raise us to — a fool's paradise, if not to — the gallows. But a true deliverer, and a good governor, says to our restless Antinomian spirits, *Come unto me, and I will give you rest! For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* We can have no rest in the church but under Christ's easy yoke; no rest in the state, but under the easy yoke of our rightful sovereign."

The political part which Wesley took at this time made him as many enemies as his decided opposition to Calvinism had done; and even some of his adherents and admirers, who, in all other things, have justified him through thick and thin, have censured him as if he had gone out of the line of his duty, acted unwisely in meddling with political disputes, and taken the wrong side. To the question, why he had written upon such subjects, he made answer, "Not to get money: not to get preferment for myself or my brother's children: not to please any man living, high or low. I know mankind too well. I know they that love you for political service, love you less than their

dinners; and they who hate you, hate you worse than the devil." It was from the clear and strong sense of duty that he acted, and it is not the least of his merits, that he was one of the first persons to expose the fallacy, and foresee the consequences of those political principles which were then beginning to convulse the world. Their natural tendency, he said, was to unhinge all government, and to plunge every nation into total anarchy. In his Observations on Liberty, addressed to Dr. Price, in answer to a pamphlet of the Doctor's, which did its share of mischief in its day, he contradicted, upon his own sure * observation, the Doctor's absurd assertion, that the population of the country had greatly decreased; he commented upon the encouragement which was

* "I *knew* the contrary," said Wesley, "having an opportunity of seeing ten times more of England every year than most men in the nation. All our manufacturing towns, as Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, Liverpool, increase daily. So do very many villages all over the kingdom, even in the mountains of Derbyshire; and, in the meantime, exceeding few, either towns or villages, decrease."

"Dr. Price," says Mr. Coleridge, in his Friend, "almost succeeded in persuading the English nation—(for it is a curious fact, that the fancy of our calamitous situation is a sort of necessary sauce, without which our real prosperity would become insipid to us)—Dr. Price, I say, alarmed the country with pretended proofs that the island was in a rapid state of depopulation; that England at the Revolution had been Heaven knows how much more populous; and that, in queen Elizabeth's time, or about the Reformation (!!!), the number of inhabitants in England might have been greater than even at the Revolution. My old mathematical master, a man of an uncommonly clear head, answered this blundering book of the worthy Doctor's, and left not a stone unturned of the pompous cenotaph, in which the effigy of the still living and bustling English prosperity lay interred. And yet so much more suitable was the Doctor's book to the purposes of faction, and to the November mood of (what is called) the PUBLIC, that Mr. Wales's pamphlet, though a master-piece of perspicacity as well as perspicuity, was scarcely heard of." Vol. ii. p. 72.

held out to the Americans in that pamphlet, and upon the accusations which were there advanced, that the British government had secured to the Canadians the enjoyment of their own laws and their own religion, for the purpose of bringing up from thence an army of French Papists, — for Dr. Price had not been ashamed to bring this charge against his country! In opposition to the Doctor's position, that liberty is more or less complete, according as the people have more or less share in the government, he contended, and appealed to history for the fact, that the greater share the people have in the government, the less liberty, either civil or religious, does the nation in general enjoy. "Accordingly," said he, "there is most liberty of all, civil and religious, under a limited monarchy, there is usually less under an aristocracy, and least of all under a democracy. The plain melancholy truth," said he, "is this; there is a general infatuation, which spreads, like an overflowing stream, from one end of the land to the other. The people of England have, for some years past, been continually fed with poison: dose after dose has been administered to them, for fear the first, or second, or tenth should not suffice, of a poison, whose natural effect is to drive men out of their senses. Is the Centaur not fabulous? neither is Circe's cup. Papers and pamphlets, representing one of the best of princes as if he had been one of the worst, — and all aiming at the same point, to make the king appear odious, as well as contemptible, in the eyes of his subjects,

are conveyed, week after week, through all London, and all the nation. Can any man wonder at the effect? What can be expected, but that they who drink in these papers and letters, with all greediness, will be thoroughly embittered and inflamed thereby; will first despise, and then abhor the king? What can be expected but that, by the repeated doses of this poison, they will be perfectly intoxicated, and only wait for a convenient season to tear in pieces the royal monster, as they think him, and all his adherents! Can any thing be done to open the eyes, to restore the senses of an infatuated nation? Not unless the still renewed, still operating cause of that infatuation can be removed. But how is it possible to be removed, unless by restraining the licentiousness of the press?"—"I am in great earnest," he says, in another place: "so I have need to be; for I am pleading the cause of my king and country, yea, of every country under heaven where there is any regular government. I am pleading against those principles that naturally tend to anarchy and confusion, that directly tend to unhinge all government, and overturn it from the foundation."

Forty thousand copies of the Calm Address were printed in three weeks; it was written before the war had actually begun, and excited so much anger among the English friends of the American cause, that, as he said, they would willingly have burnt him and it together. But though Wesley maintained that, when the principles of order and legitimate government were seditiously attacked,

it was the duty of every Christian minister to exert himself in opposing the evil spirit of the times, he saw how imprudent it would be for his preachers in America to engage in political matters. "It is your part," said he, "to be peace-makers; to be loving and tender to all, but to addict yourselves to no party. In spite of all solicitations, of rough or smooth words, say not one word against one or the other side; keep yourselves pure; do all you can to help and soften all; but 'beware how you adopt another's jar.'" In the same spirit Charles Wesley wrote to them, saying, "As to the public affairs, I wish you to be like-minded with me. I am of neither side, and yet of both: on the side of New England, and of Old. Private Christians are excused, exempted, privileged to take no part in civil troubles. *We* love all, and pray for all, with a sincere and impartial love. Faults there may be on both sides, but such as neither you nor I can remedy; therefore let us, and all our children, give ourselves unto prayer, and *so* stand still and see the salvation of God." It was scarcely possible for the preachers to follow this advice; it was scarcely possible that they could refrain from expressing their opinions upon the one subject by which all minds were possessed and inflamed, excited, as they constantly were, by sympathy or provocation. Such, indeed, was the temper of the Americans, that a friend to the Methodists got possession of all the copies of the Calm Address which were sent to New-York, and destroyed them, foreseeing the imminent danger to which

the preachers would be exposed, if a pamphlet so unpopular in its doctrines should get abroad. But the part which Wesley had taken could not be kept secret; the Methodists, in consequence, became objects of suspicion, and the personal safety of the preachers was oftentimes endangered. Tarring and feathering was not the only cruelty to which they were exposed in those days of brutal violence. The English missionaries were at length glad to escape as they could: Asbury alone remained: he was less obnoxious than his colleagues, because, having chosen the less frequented parts of the country for the scene of his exertions, he had been less conspicuous, and less exposed to provocation and to danger. Yet even he found it necessary to withdraw from public view, and conceal himself in the house of a friend, till, after two years of this confinement, he obtained credentials from the governor of Pennsylvania, which enabled him to appear abroad again with safety.

Methodism, meantime, had been kept alive by a few native preachers, of whom Freeborn Garretson, and Benjamin Abbot, a strange half-madman, were two of the most remarkable. It even increased, notwithstanding all difficulties, and something much more like persecution than it had ever undergone in England. In the year 1777, there were forty preachers, and about 7000 members, exclusive of negroes. The Society, however, as the war continued, was in danger of being broken up, by a curious species of intolerance, which could not have been foreseen. The prevail-

ing religion in the southern states had been that of the Church of England; but the clergy were driven away during the troubles, the whole of the Church property was confiscated; and, when affairs were settled, none of it was restored, and no attempt made, either by the general or provincial governments, to substitute any kind of religious instruction, in place of the Establishment which had been destroyed! The Methodists had hitherto been members of the English Church, but, upon the compulsory emigration of the clergy, they found themselves deprived of the sacraments, and could obtain no baptism for their children; for neither the Presbyterians, the Independents, or Baptists, would administer these ordinances to them, unless they would renounce their connection with Mr. Wesley, and join with their respective sects.

Before the dispute between the mother country and the colonies assumed a serious character, and before any apprehension of separation was entertained on the one side, or any intention to that effect was avowed on the other, the heads of the Church in England had represented to government, how greatly it would conduce to the interest of religion in America, if a bishop were appointed there. This judicious representation was unsuccessful; for the ministers, who were but too bold in trying experiments of another kind with the colonists, thought it better to let religious affairs remain as they were, than to introduce any innovation. If this had been done half a century earlier, as soon

as the population of the country required it, it would have been highly beneficial to America; part of the hierarchy would have submitted to, or taken part in the revolution, and thus a religious establishment might have been preserved in those parts of the United States, where the want of religious instruction is severely * felt. The ill consequences of an omission, which, whether morally or politically considered, is equally to be condemned, were now experienced. Two American youths, after the peace, came to England, for the purpose of obtaining episcopal ordination: but the Archbishop of Canterbury was of opinion, that no English bishop could ordain them, unless they took the oath of allegiance, which it was impossible for them to do. They then applied for advice and assistance to Dr. Franklin, who was at that time in France. Upon consulting a French clergyman, he found that they could not be ordained in France, unless they vowed obedience to the Archbishop of Paris; and the nuncio, whom he consulted also, informed him that the Romish bishop in America could not lay hands on them unless they turned Catholics. The advice, therefore, which they received from a man like Franklin

* I have somewhere seen it stated, that, in the large town of Richmond, there was no place of worship, till the theatre took fire, and some fourscore persons perished in the flames. Then the people took fright, and built a church upon the ruins. A lady, who published an account, in verse, of her residence in the southern states, describes, with much feeling, her emotion at hearing a church clock when she returned to her own country: "A sound," she says, "I had not heard for years."

may easily be conjectured;—it was, that the Episcopalian clergy in America should become Presbyterians; or, if they would not consent to this, that they should elect a bishop for themselves.

This latter course some of the American Methodists had already adopted. Finding themselves deprived of communion, and their children of baptism, they applied to Asbury, whom they regarded as their head, to adopt some means of providing for these ordinances. Asbury knew not how to act, and advised them to wait till circumstances should prepare the way for what they wished. It was not likely that they should follow this advice. Breaking off their connection with him, and thereby with Mr. Wesley, they elected three of their elder brethren to ordain others by imposition of hands. Asbury, however, retained so much influence, that, at a subsequent conference, this ordination was declared to be unscriptural. The schism was healed just as the peace was made; and, as soon as a communication was opened with England, he sent a representation of the case to Wesley.—Mr. Wesley had been convinced, by the perusal of Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church, that bishops and presbyters are the same order. Men are sometimes easily convinced of what they find it convenient or agreeable to believe. Regarding the apostolical succession as a fable, he thought, when this application from America arrived, that the best thing which he could do would be to secure the Wesleyan succession for the United States.

This step, however, was not taken without some demur, and a feeling that it required some justification to himself, as well as to the world. It appears that some of his friends advised an application to the bishops, requesting them to ordain preachers for America. Wesley was not aware of the legal impediment to this; but he replied, that, on a former application to the Bishop of London, his request had been unsuccessful: that, if the bishops would consent, their proceedings were notoriously slow, and this matter admitted of no delay. "If they would ordain them now," he continued, "they would expect to govern them; and how grievously would this entangle us! As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the state and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the scriptures and the primitive church; and we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free." Having, therefore, determined how to act, he communicated his determination to Dr. Coke, and proposed, in his character of presbyter, which, he said, was the same as bishop, to invest him with the same presbytero-episcopal powers, that, in that character, he might proceed to America, and superintend the societies in the United States. The doubts which Dr. Coke entertained as to the validity of Mr. Wesley's authority, were removed by the same treatise which had convinced Mr. Wesley; and it seems not to have oc-

curred, to either the one or the other, that, if presbyter and bishop were the same order, the proposed consecration was useless; for, Dr. Coke having been regularly ordained, was as good a bishop as Mr. Wesley himself.

Having, however, taken his part, he stated the reasons upon which he had acted with his wonted perspicuity. "By a very uncommon train of Providences," he said, "many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother-country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the States of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the congress, partly by the provincial assemblies; but no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation, some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice." Then asserting his opinion, that bishops and presbyters were the same order, and, consequently, had the same right to ordain, he said that, for many years, he had been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of the travelling preachers, and that he had still refused, for peace-sake, and because he was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which he belonged. "But the case," he pursued, "is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish mi-

nisters; so that, for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest."

Accordingly, he summoned Dr. Coke to Bristol, and Mr. Creighton with him, a clergyman who had become a regular member of the Methodist Connection. With their assistance he ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey, presbyters for America; and afterwards he ordained Dr. Coke superintendent. Some reason might have been expected why he thought this second ordination necessary, superintendent being but another word for bishop; and why he thus practically contradicted the very principle upon which he professed to act. Not stopping to discuss such niceties, he gave the Doctor letters of ordination, under his hand and seal, in these words: "To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late Fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, Presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting: Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the usage of the same church; and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying

them with ministers, — Know all men, that I, John Wesley, think myself to be providentially called, at this time, to set apart some persons for the work of the ministry in America. And therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart, as a Superintendent, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, a Presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work: and I do hereby recommend him, to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. — In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty four. JOHN WESLEY."

Wesley had long deceived himself respecting the part which he was acting toward the Church of England. At the outset of his career he had no intention of setting himself up in opposition to it; and when, in his progress towards schism, he disregarded its forms, and set its discipline at nought, he still repeatedly disclaimed all views of separation. Nor did he ever avow the wish, or refer to it as a likely event, with complacency, even when he must have perceived that the course of his conduct, and the temper of his followers, rendered it inevitable. On this occasion his actions spoke for him; by arrogating the episcopal authority, he took the only step which was wanting

to form the Methodists into a distinct body of separatists from the Church. Nevertheless, this was not done without reluctance, arising from old and rooted feelings; nor without some degree of shame, perhaps, for the inconsistencies in which he had involved himself. From the part which he now took, and the manner in which he attempted to justify it, it may be presumed that the story of his applying to the Greek bishop for consecration is well founded, notwithstanding the falsehoods which his enemies had added to the simple fact. Mr. Wesley's declared opinion respecting the identity of the episcopal and priestly orders, was contradicted by his own conduct; and it may be suspected, that his opinion upon the apostolical succession rested on no better ground than its convenience to his immediate purpose. Undoubtedly, as he says, it is not possible to prove the apostolical succession; but, short of that absolute proof, which, in this case, cannot be obtained, and therefore ought not to be demanded, there is every reason for believing it. No person who fairly considers the question can doubt this, whatever value he may attach to it. But Wesley knew its value. He was neither so deficient in feeling, or in sagacity, as not to know, that the sentiment which connects us with other ages, and by which we are carried back, is scarcely less useful in its influences than the hopes by which we are carried forward. He would rather have been a link of the golden chain, than the ring from whence a new one of inferior metal was to proceed.

Charles Wesley disapproved his brother's conduct on this occasion, as an unwarrantable assumption of authority, and as inconsistent with his professed adherence to the Church of England. His approbation could never be indifferent to John, whose fortunes he had, during so many years, faithfully shared, for honour and for dishonour, for better, for worse. But Dr. Coke had now succeeded to the place in Methodism from which Charles had retired, and in him Mr. Wesley found that willing and implicit obedience, which is the first qualification that the founders of a sect, an order, or a religion, require from their immediate disciples. The new superintendent, with his companions, sailed from Bristol for New York. Among the books which he read on the voyage, was the Life of St. Francis Xavier. Through all the exaggerations and fables with which that life is larded, Coke perceived the spirit of the man, and exclaimed with kindred feeling, "Oh for a soul like his! But, glory be to God, there is nothing impossible with Him. I seem to want the wings of an eagle, and the voice of a trumpet, that I may proclaim the Gospel through the east and the west, and the north and the south."

Asbury was not at New York when they arrived. Dr. Coke explained the plan which had been arranged in England, to the travelling preachers who were stationed in that city, and had the satisfaction of hearing, not only that such a plan would be highly approved by all the preachers, but of being desired to make it public at once,

"because Mr. Wesley had determined the point, and therefore it was not to be investigated, but complied with." This, however, was not done, because it would have been disrespectful to Mr. Asbury, with whom he was instructed to consult, and act in concert. On his way southward to meet him, Dr. Coke found that Methodism was in good odour in America. He was introduced to the governor of Pennsylvania; and, at an inn in the state of Delaware, the landlady, though not a Methodist herself, entertained him and his companion sumptuously, and would not receive their money; esteeming it an honour to have harboured such guests. When he had finished preaching one day, at a chapel in this state, in the midst of the woods, to a large congregation, a plain robust man came up to him in the pulpit, and kissed him, pronouncing, at the same time, a primitive salutation. This person, as he readily supposed, proved to be his colleague. Dr. Coke was prepared to esteem him, and a personal acquaintance confirmed this opinion. "I exceedingly reverence Mr. Asbury," he says, "he has so much wisdom and consideration, so much meekness and love, and, under all this, though hardly to be perceived, so much command and authority."

Asbury, expecting to meet Dr. Coke in this part of the country, had collected as many preachers as he could to hold a council. They agreed to convoke a Conference of all the preachers at Baltimore, on Christmas eve, and Freeborn Garretson was sent off on this errand, "like an arrow, from

north to south," with directions to send messengers to the right and left. This was in the middle of November; and, that Coke might not be idle in the meantime, Asbury drew up for him a route of about a thousand miles, borrowed a good horse, and gave him, for a guide and assistant, his black, Harry, of whom the Doctor says, "I really believe he is one of the best preachers in the world, there is such an amazing power attends his preaching, though he cannot read; and he is one of the humblest creatures I ever saw." Of eighty-one American preachers, sixty assembled at the Conference; and, at their meeting, the form of church-government, and the manner of worship for the Methodists in America, which Mr. Wesley had arranged, was accepted and established. The name of Superintendent, and the notion that bishops and presbyters were the same order, were now laid aside; they were mere pretexts, and had served the purpose for which they were intended. Methodism was constituted in America as an Episcopal Church. The clergy were to consist of three orders, bishops, elders, and deacons. The deacons were to be ordained by a bishop, after a probation similar to that of the travelling preachers in England. The elders were of two orders: the presiding elders were to be unanimously elected by the General Conference; they were to be assistants to the bishops, to represent them in their absence, and to act under their direction. The travelling elders were to administer the ordinances, and to perform the office of marrying; they

were to be elected by a majority of the annual Conference, and ordained by a bishop and the elders present, by imposition of hands. A deacon might not be chosen elder, till he had officiated two years in his inferior degree. A bishop was to be elected by the General Conference, and consecrated by two or three bishops: but in case the whole order should be extinct, the ceremony might then be performed by three elders. The business of the bishop was to preside in the Conferences, station the preachers, admit or suspend them during the interval of the Conferences, travel through the Connection at large, and inspect the concerns, temporal and spiritual; of the societies. Besides the General Conference, in which the supreme authority was lodged, and which had power of suspending, judging, and expelling the bishops, as well as electing them, there were to be six yearly Conferences:—the extent of the country rendered this necessary. The circuits, during the time of the Conference, were to be supplied by local preachers, engaged for the purpose, and paid in the same proportion and manner as the travelling preachers for whom they acted. A local preacher was not eligible to the office of deacon, till after four years' probation; nor might he preach, till he had obtained a certificate of approbation from his quarterly meeting. The discipline differed little from that of the English Methodists; the ritual more. In condescension to the puritanic notions which might be expected among the old Americans, the sacrament might be administered

to communicants sitting or standing, if they objected to kneel; and baptism might be performed either by sprinkling, affusion, or immersion, at the option of the parents; or, in adult cases, of the person.

At this Conference, in pursuance of Mr. Wesley's instructions, and by virtue of the authority derived from him, Dr. Coke consecrated Mr. Asbury bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. In the name of that church, an address to General Washington was drawn up, congratulating him on his appointment to the office of president, and professing the loyalty of the members, and their readiness, on all lawful occasions, to support the government then established. This was signed by Coke and Asbury, as heads of the Connection: the former, upon this occasion, in his capacity of American bishop, performing an act inconsistent with his allegiance as a British subject. He, who was always more ready to act than to think, did not, perhaps, at the time, perceive the dilemma in which he was placed; nor, if he had, would he have acted otherwise; for whenever a national and a sectarian duty come in competition with each other, the national one is that which goes to the wall. It exposed him to some severe animadversion in England, and to a semblance of displeasure from Mr. Wesley, which was merely intended to save appearances. General Washington returned a written reply, addressed to the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States.—"It should be his endeavour,"

he said, "to manifest the purity of his inclinations for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of his desires to contribute whatever might be in his power towards the civil and religious liberties of the American people. It always afforded him satisfaction, when he found a concurrence and practice between all conscientious men, in acknowledgements of homage to the Great Governor of the Universe, and in professions of support to a just civil government. He would always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine vital religion; and he assured them in particular, that he took in the kindest part their promise of presenting their prayers for him at the throne of heaven; and that he likewise implored the divine benediction on them, and their religious community."

At their first interview, the two bishops agreed to use their joint endeavours for establishing a school, or college, on the plan of Kingswood, and, before they met at the Conference, they had got above a thousand pounds subscribed for it. Relying, therefore, upon that bank of faith, which, when religious interests, real or imaginary, are concerned, may safely be drawn upon to a surprising amount, Dr. Coke gave orders to begin the work. Four acres of ground were purchased, at the price of sixty pounds sterling, eight-and-twenty miles from Baltimore: the spot commanded a view of the Chesapeak and of the Susquehanna flowing towards it, through a great extent of country, the sight extending from twenty to fifty

miles in different parts of the splendid panorama. The students were to rise at five, summer and winter; upon this rule the masters were to insist inflexibly, the founders being convinced, they said, by constant observation and experience, that it was of vast importance, both to body and mind; for it was of admirable use in preserving a good, or improving a bad constitution; and by thus strengthening the various organs of the body, it enabled the mind to put forth its utmost energies. At six they were to assemble to prayer, and the interval till seven was allowed for recreation; the recreations being gardening, walking, riding, and bathing; and, within doors, the carpenters', joiners', cabinet-makers', and turners' business. Nothing which the world calls *play* was to be permitted. Dr. Coke had brought with him Wesley's sour precept, that those who play when they are young, will play when they are old; and he supported it by the authority of Locke and Rousseau, saying, "that though the latter was essentially mistaken in his religious system, yet his wisdom, in other respects, was indisputably acknowledged!" He judged well, however, in recommending agriculture and architecture as studies especially useful in a new country, and therefore to be preferred for the recreation of the students. The permission of bathing was restricted to a plunge into a cold bath: bathing in the river was forbidden; a prohibition apparently so absurd, that some valid local reason for it must be presumed. The hours of study were from eight till twelve, and from three

till six; breakfast at eight, dinner at one, supper at six, prayers at seven, and bed at nine. The punishments were, private reproof for a first offence, public reproof for a second, and, for the third, confinement in a room set apart for the purpose.

The establishment was named Cokesbury * College, after its two founders. An able president was found, a good master, and, in the course of a few years, the institution acquired so much repute, that young men, from the Southern States, came there to finish their education; and the founders were apprized, that the legislature was willing to grant them an act of incorporation, and enable them to confer degrees. The reputation of this college gratified the American Methodists,

* In the year 1792 the college was set on fire, and burnt to the ground, the whole of its apparatus and library being destroyed. The state offered a reward of one thousand dollars for the discovery of the incendiary, but without effect. Dr. Coke was not deterred from a second attempt, and seventeen of his friends, in the Baltimore Society, immediately subscribed among themselves more than one thousand pounds toward the establishment of another college. A large building in the city of Baltimore, which had been intended for balls and assemblies, was purchased, with all the premises belonging to it, for five thousand three hundred pounds. The Society subscribed seven hundred of this, and collected six hundred more from house to house; the seventeen original subscribers made themselves responsible for the rest. There was room for a church upon the ground, and a church accordingly was built. This college was even more successful than Cokesbury while it lasted; but it came to the same fate in 1797. Some boys made a bonfire in an adjoining house, and college, church, and several dwellings and warehouses were consumed. By the two fires the Methodists sustained a loss of ten thousand pounds. Dr. Coke then agreed with Asbury, who, after the first catastrophe, was convinced "that it was not the will of God for them to undertake such expensive buildings, nor to attempt such popular establishments." As these events did not occur till after the death of Mr. Wesley, they are noticed here, rather than in the text.

and disposed them to found others. The people in Kentucky requested to have one in their country, and offered to give three or four thousand acres of good land for its support. The reply to this application was, that Conference would undertake to complete one within ten years, if the people would provide five thousand acres of fertile ground, and settle it on trustees under its direction. In Georgia, a few leading persons engaged to give two thousand acres; and one congregation subscribed twelve thousand five hundred pounds weight of tobacco towards the building. Institutions of this kind are endowed at so small a cost in new countries, that, with a little foresight on the part of government, provision might easily be made for the wants, and palliatives prepared for the evils, of advanced society.

Had the institution in Georgia been effected, it was to have been called Wesley College, in reference to Mr. Wesley's early labours in that country. At this time he was so popular in America, that some hundreds of children were baptized by his name. This was in great measure owing to the choice which he had made of Dr. Coke, whose liberal manners, and rank of life, obtained him access among the higher classes upon equal terms, and flattered those in a lower station with whom he made himself familiar. The good opinion, however, which his representative had obtained among all ranks, was lessened, and, for a time, well nigh destroyed, by the indiscretion with which he exerted himself in behalf of a good cause.

Wesley had borne an early testimony against the system of negro slavery: on this point his conduct is curiously contrasted with Whitefield's, who exerted himself in * obtaining a repeal of that part of the charter granted to the colony in Georgia, whereby slavery was prohibited. Dr. Coke, feeling like Mr. Wesley, took up the subject with his usual ardour, preached upon it with great vehemence, and prepared a petition to Congress for the emancipation of the negroes. With this petition he and Asbury went to General Washington at Mount Vernon, and solicited him to sign it. Washington received them courteously and hospitably: he declined signing the petition, that being inconsistent with the rank which he held; but he assured them that he agreed with them, and that, if the Assembly should take their petition into consideration, he would signify his sentiments by a letter. They proceeded so far themselves, that they required the members of the society to set their slaves free; and several persons were found who made this sacrifice from a sense of duty. One planter in Virginia emancipated twenty-two,

* "As for the lawfulness of keeping slaves," he says, "I have no doubt, since I hear of some that were bought with Abraham's money, and some that were born in his house. And I cannot help thinking that some of those servants mentioned by the Apostles in their epistles, were, or had been slaves. It is plain that the Gibeonites were doomed to perpetual slavery; and, though liberty is a sweet thing to such as are born free, yet, to those who never knew the sweets of it, slavery perhaps may not be so irksome. However this be, it is plain to a demonstration, that hot countries cannot be cultivated without negroes." So miserably could Whitefield reason! He flattered, however, his better feelings, by supposing that the slaves who should be brought into Georgia would be placed in the way of conversion.

who were, at that time, worth from thirty to forty pounds each. His name was Kennon, and it deserves to be honourably recorded. But such instances were rare; and Dr. Coke, who had much of the national ardour in his character, proceeded in such an intolerant * spirit of philanthropy, that he soon provoked a violent opposition, and incurred no small degree of personal danger. One of his sermons upon this topic incensed some of his hearers so much, that they withdrew, for the purpose of way-laying him; and a lady negro-owner promised them fifty pounds, if they would give "that little Doctor" an hundred lashes. But the better part of his congregation protected him, and that same sermon produced the emancipation of twenty-four slaves. In one county the slave-owners presented a bill against him, which was found by the grand jury, and no less than ninety persons set out in pursuit of him; but he was got beyond their reach. A more ferocious enemy followed him, with an intention of shooting him: this the man himself confessed, when, some time afterwards, he became a member of the Methodist

* These extracts from his journal will exemplify that spirit; "At night I lodged at the house of Captain Dillard a most hospitable man, and as kind to his negroes as if they were white servants. It was quite pleasing to see them so decently and comfortably clothed. And yet I could not beat into the head of that poor man the evil of keeping them in slavery, although he had read Mr. Wesley's Thoughts on Slavery (I think he said) three times over. But his good wife is strongly on our side."—"I preached the late Colonel Bedford's funeral sermon. But I said nothing good of him, for he was a violent friend of slavery; and his interest being great among the Methodists in these parts, he would have been a dreadful thorn in our sides, *if the Lord had not in mercy taken him away.*"!!

Society. On his second visit to America, Coke was convinced that he had acted indiscreetly, and he consented to let the question of emancipation rest, rather than stir up an opposition which so greatly impeded the progress of methodism.

If a course of itinerancy in England led the errant preacher into picturesque scenes and wild situations, much more might this be expected in America. Coke was delighted with the romantic way of life in which he found himself engaged;—preaching in the midst of ancient forests, "with scores, and sometimes hundreds of horses tied to the trees."—"Sometimes," he says, "a most noble vista, of half a mile or a mile in length, would open between the lofty pines; sometimes the tender fawns and hinds would suddenly appear, and, on seeing or hearing us, would glance through the woods, or vanish away." The spring scenery of these woods filled him with delight. "The oaks," says he, "have spread out their leaves, and the dogwood, whose bark is medicinal, and whose innumerable white flowers form one of the finest ornaments of the forests, is in full blossom. The *deep* green of the pines, the bright *transparent* green of the oaks, and the fine white of the dogwood flowers, with other trees and shrubs, form such a complication of beauties as is indescribable to those who have only lived in countries that are almost entirely cultivated."—"It is one of my most delicate entertainments, to embrace every opportunity of ingulphing myself, (if I may so express it,) in the woods: I seem then to be detached from every

thing but the quiet vegetable creation and my God." A person always went before him to *make his publications;* by which strange phrase is implied a notice to all the country round, in what place, and at what times, the itinerant was to be expected. Their mark for finding the way in these wide wildernesses was the *split bush.* When a new circuit in the woods was formed, at every turning of the road or path, the preacher split two or three bushes beside the right way, as a direction * for those who came after him. They had no cause to repent of their labour in travelling; for numerous hearers were collected, insomuch that Dr. Coke was astonished at the pains which the people took to hear the Gospel. Idleness and curiosity brought many, and many came for the pleasure of being in a crowd; but numbers were undoubtedly drawn together by that desire of religious instruction which is the noblest characteristic of man, and for which, by the greatest of all political errors, the American government has neglected to provide. "I am daily filled with surprise," he says, "in meeting with such large congregations as I am favoured with in the midst of vast wildernesses, and wonder from whence they come!" It appears that the spirit of riotous devotion, which afterwards produced the fanatical extravagancies of the camp-meetings, began to manifest itself in the early days of American Methodism, and that it was encouraged by the

* "In one of the circuits the wicked discovered the secret, and split bushes in wrong places, on purpose to deceive the preachers."

superiors when it might have been repressed. "At Annapolis," says Dr. Coke, "after my last prayer, the congregation began to pray and praise aloud in a most astonishing manner. At first I found some reluctance to enter into the business; but soon the tears began to flow, and I think I have seldom found a more comforting or strengthening time. This praying and praising aloud is a common thing throughout Virginia and Maryland. What shall we say? Souls are awakened and converted by multitudes; and the work is surely a genuine work, if there be a genuine work of God upon earth. Whether there be wild-fire in it or not, I do most ardently wish that there was such a work at this present time in England." At Baltimore, after the evening service was concluded, "the congregation began to pray and praise aloud, and continued so to do till two o'clock in the morning. Out of a congregation of two thousand people, two or three hundred were engaged at the same time in praising God, praying for the conviction and conversion of sinners, or exhorting those around them with the utmost vehemence; and hundreds more were engaged in wrestling prayer, either for their own conversion, or sanctification. The first noise of the people soon brought a multitude to see what was going on. One of our elders was the means that night of the conversion of seven poor penitents within his little circle in less than fifteen minutes. Such was the zeal of many, that a tolerable company attended the preaching at five the next morning, notwithstand-

ing the late hour at which they parted." The next evening the same uproar was renewed, and the maddened congregation continued in their excesses as long and as loud as before. The practice became common in Baltimore, though that city had been one of the 'calmest and most critical' upon the continent.—"Many of our elders," says Coke, "who were the softest, most connected, and most sedate of our preachers, have entered with all their hearts into this work. And gracious and wonderful has been the change, our greatest enemies themselves being the judges, that has been wrought on multitudes, on whom the work began at those wonderful seasons."

Plainly as it had been shown among the Methodists themselves, that emotions of this kind were like a fire of straw, soon kindled and soon spent, the disposition, whenever it manifested itself, was encouraged rather than checked; so strong is the tendency toward enthusiasm. But if Dr. Coke, with the advantages of education, rank in life, and of the lessons which he derived from Mr. Wesley, when age and long experience had cooled him, could be so led away by sympathy as to give his sanction to these proceedings, it might be expected that preachers, who had grown up in a state of semi-civilization, and were in the first effervescence of their devotional feelings, would go beyond all bounds in their zeal. They used their utmost endeavours, (as had been advised in the third Conference) "to throw men into convictions, into strong sorrow, and fear,—to make them inconsolable, re-

fusing to be comforted;" believing that the stronger was the conviction, the speedier was the deliverance. "The darkest time in the night," said one, "is just before the dawning of the day; so it is with a soul groaning for redemption." They used, therefore, to address the unawakened in the most alarming strain, teaching them that "God out of Christ is a consuming fire!" and to address the most enthusiastic language to those who were in what they called a seeking state, in order to keep them "on the full stretch for sanctification." Benjamin Abbott not only threw his hearers into fits, but often fainted himself through the vehemence of his own prayers and preachments. He relates such exploits with great satisfaction,—how one person could neither eat nor drink for three days after one of his drastic sermons; and how another was, for the same length of time, totally deprived of the use of her limbs. A youth who was standing on the hearth beside a blazing fire, in the room where Abbott was holding forth, overcome by the contagious emotion which was excited, tottered and fell into the flames. He was instantly rescued, "providentially," says the preacher, "or he would have been beyond the reach of mercy: his body would have been burned to death, and what would have become of his soul!" When they preached within the house, and with closed doors, the contaminated air may have contributed to these deleterious effects; for he himself notices one instance, where, from the exceeding closeness of the room, and the number of persons

crowded together there, the candles gradually went out. But the maddening spirit of the man excited his hearers almost to frenzy.

One day this itinerant went to a funeral, where many hundreds were collected. "The minister," he says, "being of the Church form, went through the ceremonies, and then preached a short, easy, smooth, soft sermon, which amounted to almost nothing. By this time a gust was rising, and the firmament was covered with blackness. Two clouds appeared to come from different quarters, and to meet over the house, which caused the people to crowd into the house, up stairs and down, to screen themselves from the storm. When the minister had done, he asked me if I would say something to the people. I arose, and with some difficulty got on one of the benches, the house was so greatly crowded; and almost as soon as I began, the Lord out of heaven began also. The tremendous claps of thunder exceeded any thing I ever had heard, and the streams of lightning flashed through the house in a most awful manner. It shook the very foundation of the house: the windows shook with the violence thereof. I lost no time, but set before them the awful coming of Christ in all his splendour, with all the armies of heaven, to judge the world and to take vengeance on the ungodly. It may be, cried I, that he will descend in the next clap of thunder! The people screamed, screeched, and fell, all through the house. The lightning, thunder, and rain, continued for about the space of one hour in the

most awful manner ever known in that country; during which time I continued to set before them the coming of Christ to judge the world, warning and inviting sinners to flee to Christ." He declares that, fourteen years afterwards, when he rode that circuit, he conversed with twelve living witnesses who told him they were all converted at that sermon.

One day, when Abbott was exhorting a class to sanctification, and a young Quakeress was "screaming and screeching and crying for purity of heart," her father, hearing her outcries, came into the room, and with a mild reproof to this director of consciences, reminded him that the Lord is not in the earthquake, nor in the whirlwind, but in the still small voice. The passionate enthusiast readily replied, "Do you know what the earthquake means? It is the mighty thunder of God's voice from Mount Sinai; it is the divine law to drive us to Christ. And the whirlwind is the power of conviction, like the rushing of a mighty wind, tearing away every false hope, and stripping us of every plea, but—Give me Christ, or else I die!" On another occasion, when a young Quakeress was present at a meeting, and retained a proper command of herself while others were fainting and falling round about her, Abbott regarding this as a proof of insensibility to the state of her own soul, looked her full in the face, and began to pray for her as an infidel, and called upon all his hearers to do the same. The young woman was abashed, and retired; but as she made her way slowly

through the crowded room, "I cried to God," says the fiery fanatic, "to pursue her by the energy of his Spirit through the streets; to pursue her in the parlour, in the kitchen, and in the garden; to pursue her in the silent watches of the night, and to shew her the state of the damned in hell; to give her no rest day nor night, until she found rest in the wounds of a blessed Redeemer." He relates this himself, and adds, that in consequence of this appeal she soon afterwards joined the Methodists, in opposition to the will of her parents.

"Oh," said Wesley, in one of his sermons, "the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! causing a total disregard of all religion to pave the way for the revival of the only religion which was worthy of God! The total indifference of the government in North America whether there be any religion or none, leaves room for the propagation of true scriptural religion, without the least let or hindrance." He overlooked another consequence, which the extravagance of his own preachers might have taught him. Wherever the prime duty of providing religious instruction for the people is neglected, the greater part become altogether careless of their eternal interests, and the rest are ready to imbibe the rankest fanaticism, or embrace any superstition that may be promulgated among them. A field is open for impostors as well as fanatics; some are duped and plundered, and others are driven mad. Benjamin Abbott seems to have been a sincere and well-mean-

ing enthusiast, upon the very verge of madness himself. From the preaching of such men an increase of insanity might well be expected; and accordingly it is asserted, that a fourth part of the cases of this malady in Philadelphia arise from enthusiastic devotion, and that this and the abuse of ardent spirits are principal causes of the same disease in Virginia. But the fermentation of Methodism will cease in America, as it has ceased in England; and even during its effervescence, the good which it produces is greater than the evil. For though there must be many such fierce fanatics as Abbott, there will be others of a gentler nature: as the general state of the country may improve, the preachers will partake of the improvement; and, meantime, they contribute to that improvement in no slight degree, by correcting the brutal vices, and keeping up a sense of religion in regions where it might otherwise be extinct. At their first general conference, the American preachers made a rule respecting spirituous liquors, the common use of which has greatly tended to brutalize the people in that country. They decreed, that if any thing disorderly happened under the roof of a member, who either sold ardent spirits, or gave them to his guests, "the preacher who had the oversight of the circuit should proceed against him, as in the case of other immoralities," and he should be censured, suspended, or excluded, according to the circumstances. The zeal with which they made war against the pomps and vanities of society was less usefully directed. "Such

days and nights as those were!" says one of the early preachers. "The fine, the gay, threw off their ruffles, their rings, their ear-rings, their powder, their feathers. Opposition, indeed, there was; for the Devil would not be still. My life was threatened; but my friends were abundantly more in number than my enemies." In attacking these things, the preacher acted in entire conformity with the spirit of Wesley's institutions: but in America, Wesley would perhaps have modified the rigour of his own rules; for even Franklin, who long maintained opinions as rigorous upon this point as Wesley himself, at length discovered that vanities like these have their use, in giving a spur to industry, and accelerating the progress of civilization.

There were parts of the country where the people must have remained altogether without the ordinances of religion, had it not been for the Methodists. Dr. Coke observes, that in his first tour in America, he baptized more children and adults than he should have done in his whole life if stationed in an English parish. The people of Delaware had scarcely ever heard preaching of any kind, when Freeborn Garretson entered that country in one of his circuits. Meeting a man there one day, he asked him, in a methodistical manner, if he knew Jesus Christ; and the man answered, that he did not know where he lived. Garretson repeated the question, supposing that it had not been distinctly heard; and the reply then was, that he knew no such person. Before the

Methodists had built chapels for themselves, they officiated sometimes in curious situations, either because there was no place of worship, or none to which they had access. The church-doors at Cambridge, in Maryland, were locked upon Dr. Coke, though there had been no service there for some years, and though it had often been left open for dogs, and pigs, and cattle. At another place, the church was in so filthy a condition, that, at the people's desire, he held forth in the court-house instead. At Raleigh, the seat of government for North Carolina, he obtained the use of the house of commons: the members of both houses attended, and the speaker's seat served for a pulpit. At Annapolis, they lent him the theatre. "Pit, boxes, and gallery," says he, "were filled with people according to their ranks in life; and I stood upon the stage, and preached to them, though at first, I confess, I felt it a little awkward."

Itinerants in America were liable to discomforts and dangers which are unknown in England. There were perilous swamps to cross; rivers to ford; the risk of going astray * in the wilderness; and the plague of ticks in the forests, which are so great a torment, that Dr. Coke was almost laid up by

* Brother Ignatius Pigman was lost for sixteen days in the woods on the way to Kentucky. This inhuman name reminds me of a controversialist, who advanced the notion of the pre-existence of the human soul of Christ, and fiercely supported his notion, which he called Pre-existarianism, in the last series of the Gospel Magazine. His name being Newcomb, he signed himself *Peigneneuve*, to show his knowledge of the French tongue; and one of his adversaries, who, if peradventure less accomplished in languages, was not less witty than himself, "wickedly detorted" this word, and called him Mr. Pig-enough.

their bites. To these difficulties, and to the inconveniences of sometimes sleeping on the floor, sometimes three in a bed, and sometimes bivouacking in the woods, the native preachers were less sensible than those who came from Europe; but a great proportion of the itinerants settled when they became fathers of families. "It is most lamentable," says Coke, "to see so many of our able married preachers (or rather, I might say, almost all of them) become located merely for want of support for their families. I am conscious it is not the fault of the people: it is the fault of the preachers, who, through a false and most unfortunate delicacy, have not pressed the important subject as they ought, upon the consciences of the people. I am truly astonished that the work has risen to its present height on this continent, when so much of the spirit of prophecy, of the gifts of preaching, yea, of the most precious gifts which God bestows on mortals, should thus miserably be thrown away. I could, methinks, enter into my closet, and weep tears of blood upon the occasion." At another time he says, "The location of so many scores of our most able and experienced preachers tears my very heart in pieces. Methinks, almost the whole continent would have fallen before the power of God, had it not been for this enormous evil." Dr. Coke himself had the true spirit of an errant preacher, and therefore did not consider how natural it is, that men should desire to settle quietly in domestic life, and how just and rea-

sonable it is that they should be enabled and encouraged to do so after a certain length of service. Mr. Wesley's original intention was, that the Methodist preachers should be auxiliaries to the Church of England, as the friars and the Jesuits are to the Church of Rome. In America, where there is no Church, it would be consistent with this intention, that the Methodists should have an order of settled pastors in place of the clergy.

But though the American intinerants withdrew from their labours earlier than their brethren in the mother-country, new adventurers were continually offering themselves to supply their place, and the increase of Methodism was far more rapid than in England. In the year 1786, two-and-twenty chapels were built in a single circuit within the State of South Carolina, and the society in that same year had added to its numbers in the United States, more than 6600 members. In 1789 when the census of the Methodists in Great Britain amounted to 70,305, that in America was 43,265. In less than twenty years afterwards, they doubled their numbers at home; but the Americans had then become the more numerous body, and their comparative increase was much greater than this statement would imply, because it was made upon a much smaller population.

CHAP. XXVIII.

METHODISM IN THE WEST-INDIES.

In the year 1758, Wesley baptized some negroes at Wandsworth, who were in the service of Nathaniel Gilbert, Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua. Mr. Gilbert was a man of ardent piety, and being desirous of promoting religion in a part of the world where slavery had produced the greatest possible degradation of the moral feeling, he invited Mr. Fletcher to return with him. Mr. Fletcher hesitated, and consulted Charles Wesley; "I have weighed the matter," said he; "but, on one hand, I feel that I have neither sufficient zeal, nor grace, nor talents, to expose myself to the temptations and labours of a mission to the West-Indies; and, on the other, I believe that if God call me thither the time is not yet come. I wish to be certain that I am converted myself, before I leave my converted brethren to convert heathens. Pray let me know what you think of this business. If you condemn me to put the sea between us, the command would be a hard one; but I might possibly prevail on myself to give you that proof of the deference I pay to your judicious advice." That proof was not exacted. Fletcher remained in England, where he rendered more essential service to Methodism by his writings,

than he could have done as a missionary, and Mr. Gilbert returned to Antigua without any minister, or preacher in his company. Being, however, enthusiastic by constitution, as well as devout by principle, he prayed and preached in his own house to such persons as would assemble to hear him on Sundays; and, encouraged by the facility of which he found himself possessed, and the success with which these beginnings were attended, he went forth and preached to the negroes. This conduct drew upon him contempt, or compassion, according as it was imputed to folly, or to insanity.* But he had his reward; the poor negroes listened willingly to the consolations of Christianity, and he lived to form some two hundred persons into a Methodist society, according to Mr. Wesley's rules.

After Mr. Gilbert's death the black people were kept together by two negresses, who prayed to them when they assembled, and preserved among them the forms of the society as far as they could, and the spirit of devotion. In the year 1778, a shipwright,

* A son of Mr. Gilbert published, in the year 1796, "The Hurricane, a Theosophical and Western Eclogue," and shortly afterwards placarded the walls in London with the largest bills that had at that time been seen, announcing "The Law of Fire." I knew him well, and look back with a melancholy pleasure to the hours which I have past in his society, when his mind was in ruins. His madness was of the most incomprehensible kind, as may be seen in the notes to the Hurricane; but the poem contains passages of exquisite beauty. I have among my papers some curious memorials of this interesting man. They who remember him (as some of my readers will) will not be displeased at seeing him thus mentioned with the respect and regret which are due to the wreck of a noble mind.

by name John Baxter, who was in the king's service, removed from the royal docks at Chatham, to English Harbour in Antigua, and, happily for himself and the poor negroes, he survived his removal to one of the most fatal places in all those islands. He had been for some years a leader among the Methodists, and upon his arrival, he took upon himself immediately, as far as his occupation would allow, the management of the society. His Sundays he devoted entirely to them; and on the other days of the week, after his day's work was done, he rode about to the different plantations, to instruct and exhort the slaves, when they also were at rest from their labour. Some of them would come three or four miles to hear him. He found it hard to flesh and blood, he said, to work all day, and then ride ten miles at night to preach; but the motive supported him, and he was probably the happiest man upon the island. He married, and thereby established himself there. The contributions of his hearers, though he was the only white man in the society, enabled him to build a chapel. He wrote to Mr. Wesley from time to time, requested his directions, and expressed a hope that some one would come to his assistance. "The old standers," said he, "desire me to inform you that you have many children in Antigua, whom you never saw."

Baxter was, after a while, assisted by an English woman, who having an annuity charged upon an estate in the island, had found it necessary to reside there. She opened her house for prayers every

day, and set apart one evening every week for reading the Scriptures, to all who would hear. These meetings were much frequented; "for the English," says this lady, "can scarcely conceive the hunger and thirst expressed by a poor negro, when he has learned that the soul is immortal, and is under the operation of awakening influences." Further assistance arrived in a manner remarkable enough to deserve relation. An old man and his wife at Waterford, being past their labour, were supported by two of their sons. They were Methodists; the children had been religiously brought up, and in their old age the parents found the benefit of having trained them in the way they should go. At the close of the American war, America was represented to the two sons as a land flowing with milk and honey, and they were advised to emigrate. Go they would not, without the consent of their parents; and the old people entreated them to wait a little, till they should be in the grave: the youths, however, unwilling to wait, and incapable of forsaking their parents, proposed that they should go together, and succeeded in persuading them. Having no means of paying for their passage, the poor lads indented themselves to the captain of a ship, who was collecting white slaves for the Virginia market; and as the old people could be of no use as bond-servants, the boys were bound for a double term on their account. How the parents, incapable as they were of supporting themselves, were to be supported in a strange land, when their children were

in bondage, was a question which never occurred to any one of the family. A married son and his wife came on board to take leave, and they were persuaded by their relations and by the crimping skipper to join the party upon the same terms. No sooner had they sailed than they were made to feel the bitterness of their condition: slaves they had made themselves, and like slaves they were treated by the white-slave-monger who had entrapped them. Happily for them, after a miserable voyage, the ship was driven to the West-Indies, and put into Antigua like a floating wreck, almost by miracle. The old Irishman, hearing that there were Methodists on the island, enquired for the preaching-house, and Methodism proved more advantageous to him than free-masonry would have done. It procured him real and active friends, who ransomed the whole family. Good situations were procured for the three sons: the old man acted under Baxter; being well acquainted with the routine of the society, he was of great use; and by the year 1786 the persons under their spiritual care amounted to nearly two thousand, chiefly negroes.

In that year Dr. Coke embarked upon his second voyage to America. The season was stormy, and the captain being one of those persons who have a great deal of superstition without the slightest piety, conceived that the continuance of bad weather was brought on by the praying and preaching of the Doctor and his companions. One day, therefore, in the force of the tempest, while these

passengers were fervently praying for the preservation of the ship and of the lives of all on board, the skipper paraded the deck in great agitation, muttering to himself, but so as to be distinctly heard, "We have a Jonah on board! We have a Jonah on board!" till, having worked himself almost into a state of madness, he burst into Coke's cabin, seized his books and writings, and tossed them into the sea; and, griping the Doctor himself, who was a man of diminutive stature, swore that if ever he made another prayer on board that ship he would throw him overboard, after his papers. At length the vessel, after imminent danger, succeeded in reaching Antigua. It was on Christmas-day. Dr. Coke went in search of Mr. Baxter, and met him on the way to officiate at the chapel. To the latter this event was as joyful as it was unexpected: the former performed the service for him, and administered the sacrament. He was delighted with the appearance of the congregation, one of the cleanest, he said, that he had ever seen. The negresses were dressed in white linen gowns, petticoats, handkerchiefs, and caps; and their whole dress, which was beautifully clean, appeared the whiter from the contrast of their skins.

Dr. Coke's arrival occasioned a considerable stir in the capital of this little island. He preached twice a-day, and curiosity brought such numbers to hear him, that in the evenings the poor negroes, who by their savings had built the chapel, could find no room in it. The good effect of Methodism

upon the slaves had been so apparent, that it was no longer necessary, as it formerly had been, to enforce military law during the holydays which were allowed them at Christmas. They were made better servants, as they were instructed in their moral and religious duties. Methodism, therefore, was in high favour there, and Dr. Coke was informed, that if five hundred a-year would detain him in Antigua, it should be forthcoming. "God be praised," he says, "five hundred thousand a-year would be to me a feather, when opposed to my usefulness in the church of Christ." He and his companions were hospitably entertained and treated, he says, rather like princes than subjects; and the company of merchants invited them to a dinner which was given to Prince William-Henry.

Here Dr. Coke held what he calls an Infant-Conference. Invitations for the preachers came from St. Vincent's; and recommendatory letters were given them to the islands of St. Eustatius and St. Kitt's. "All is of God," said Coke; "I have no doubt, but it would be an open resistance to the clear providences of the Almighty, to remove any one of the missionaries at present from this country." Of the three who had embarked with him from England for America, it was determined that one should remain in Antigua; and Baxter gave up the place which he held under government, and which was worth 400*l.* a-year currency, that he might devote his whole strength and time to the spiritual service

of his fellow-creatures. His wife, though a Creole, well born, and delicately brought up, readily consented to this sacrifice, and cheerfully submitted to her part of the discomforts and privations inseparable from an itinerant life; for even among the islands itinerancy was considered as an essential part of the Methodist economy. Leaving, therefore, Mr. Warrenner in Antigua, Coke departed, with Baxter and the other two brothers, to reconnoitre the neighbouring islands. They were hospitably entertained at Dominica, at St. Vincent's, Nevis, and St. Kitt's; and though the commanding officer would not give permission for preaching in the barracks at St. Vincent's, where some religious soldiers would soon have formed a society, Dr. Coke thought the general prospect so encouraging that he said the will of God, in respect to the appointment of a Missionary there, was as clear as if it had been written with a sunbeam. Mr. Clarke accordingly was stationed there, and Mr. Hammet at St. Kitt's.

When they arrived at St. Eustatius, they found that a slave, by name Harry, who had been a member of the Methodist Society in America, had taken to exhorting in that island, and had been silenced by the governor, because the slaves were so affected at hearing him, that "many fell down as if they were dead, and some remained in a state of stupor during several hours." Sixteen persons had been thrown into these fits in one night. This was a case in which the governor's interference was perfectly justifiable and right. The day after this

event, Coke and his companions landed, and waited upon the persons in authority. They soon found that the degree of freedom which is every where enjoyed under the British government, is not to be found in the dominions of any other European power. They were ordered to prepare their confession of faith and credentials, and to present them to the court, and to be private in their devotions, till the court had considered whether their religion should be tolerated or not. The council were satisfied with the confession, and Dr. Coke was desired to preach before them. But it was evident that the government would not permit the establishment of an English mission upon that island, though the inhabitants were exceedingly desirous of it. Dr. Coke, during a fortnight's stay, did what he could towards forming such as were willing into classes, and instructing them in the forms of Methodism, and was laden with presents of sea-stores and other refreshments, when he embarked from thence to pursue his voyage to America.

So fair a beginning was thus made, that from that time it became as regular a part of business for the Conference to provide for the West-Indies, as for any part of Great Britain in which societies had been raised. In the autumn of 1788, the indefatigable Coke (who may properly be called the Xavier of Methodism) sailed a third time for the western world, taking with him three missionaries intended for the Columbian Islands. They were embarked in that unfortunate ship, the Hankey, which has

been accused of importing, in a subsequent voyage, the yellow fever from Bulama to the West Indies, as if that pestilence were not the growth of those countries. Every thing was favourable now, and the missionaries succeeded so well in conciliating the good will of the crew, that when they took leave of them at Barbadoes, many of the men were in tears, and the sailors bade them farewell with three hearty cheers as the boat dropped astern. Coke with his companions landed at Bridgetown, as adventurously as ever knight-errant set foot upon an island with his squire and his dwarf. None of the party supposed that they had a single acquaintance in Barbadoes. There were, however, some soldiers there, who had been quartered at Kinsale in Ireland, where Mr. Pearce, one of the missionaries, had preached; he was presently recognised by a serjeant, who embraced him without ceremony; and it appeared that this serjeant and some of his comrades had kept up the forms of Methodism, and were in the habit of exhorting the people, in a warehouse which a friendly merchant had lent them for that purpose. Before Dr. Coke could wait upon this merchant, he received an invitation to breakfast with him: he proved to have been one of his hearers in America, where four of his negroes had been baptized by the Doctor. The missionaries were immediately received into his house; they were encouraged by the governor, and by the merchants and planters to whom they were introduced. Pearce was left upon the island; and Coke, having placed every thing in as favour-

able a train as could be wished, proceeded to St. Vincent's, whither the other two missionaries had preceded him, and where he was joined by Baxter. One of the party was stationed there to assist the former preacher; and Baxter and his wife willingly consented to take up their abode among the Caribs, and endeavour at the same time to civilize and to convert them.

Continuing his circuit, Dr. Coke formed a society at Dominica, and finding all prosperous at Antigua and St. Kitt's, visited St. Eustatius. Here he found that the aspects were different. The black Harry, after the Doctor's departure from his former visit, interpreting the governor's prohibition according to the letter rather than the spirit, abstained indeed from preaching to his fellow-slaves, but ventured to pray with them. For this offence he was publicly whipped and imprisoned, and then banished from the island. And an edict was issued, declaring, that if any white person should be found praying with others who were not of his family, he should be fined fifty pieces of eight for the first offence, a hundred for the second, and for the third offence he should be whipped, his goods confiscated, and himself banished the island. A free man of colour was to receive thirty-nine stripes for the first offence, and for the second to be flogged and banished; and a slave was to be flogged every time he was found offending." "This, I think," says Dr. Coke, "is the first instance, known among mankind, of a persecution openly avowed against religion itself. The perse-

cutions among the heathens were supported under the pretence that the Christians brought in strange gods; those among the Roman Catholics were under the pretext of the Protestants introducing heresies into the church; but this is openly and avowedly against *prayer*, the great key to every blessing." Notwithstanding this edict, and the rigour with which it was enforced, so strong was the desire of the poor people on this island for religious instruction and religious sympathy, that Dr. Coke found above two hundred and fifty persons there classed as Methodists, and baptized a hundred and forty of them. He remained there only one night; but the sloop which he had hired to carry him and his companions to St. Kitt's, having received much damage by striking against a ship, they were obliged to return; and Coke, who interpreted this accident as a plain declaration of Providence, whereby he was called on to bear a public testimony for Christ, immediately hired a large room for a month. Whatever danger might be incurred would fall upon himself, he thought, by this proceeding; whereas his friends would have been amenable to the laws if he had preached in their houses. The next day, therefore, he boldly performed service, and gave notice that he intended to officiate again on the morrow. But Dutch governors are not persons who will suffer their authority to be set at nought with impunity; and on the ensuing morning the Doctor received a message from the governor, requiring him, and two of his companions, who were specified

by name, to engage that they would not, publicly or privately, by day or by night, preach either to whites or blacks, during their stay in that island, on pain of prosecution, arbitrary punishment, and banishment. "We withdrew to consult," says he; "and after considering that we were favoured by Providence with an open door in other islands, for as many missionaries as we could spare, and that God was carrying on his blessed work even in this island by means of secret class-meetings; and that Divine Providence may in future redress these grievances by a change of the governor, or by the interference of the superior powers in Holland in some other way, we gave for answer, that we would obey the government; and, having nothing more at present to do in that place of tyranny, oppression, and wrong, we returned to St. Kitt's, blessing God for a British constitution and a British government."

There was in Dr. Coke's company a third missionary, by name Brazier, whom the governor had not heard of, and who therefore was not included in the mandate. He thought himself perfectly justified in leaving this missionary upon the island. There were times in which such an experiment might have cost the contraband preacher his life; and if the governor had been as eager to persecute as Coke supposed him to be, Brazier would certainly not have got off with a whole skin. The truth seems to be, that the governor's interference had in the first instance been necessary. Harry's preaching was of that kind which ought not to be

tolerated, because it threw his hearers into fits. If Dr. Coke, on his first landing, had distinctly expressed his disapprobation of such excesses, things might possibly have taken a different turn. But he had learned to regard them as the outward signs and manifestations of inward grace; and the governor, seeing that the black preacher was acknowledged by him as a fellow-labourer, regarded him and his companions as troublesome fanatics, and treated them accordingly. And when he discovered that Brazier had been clandestinely left behind, he behaved with more temper than might have been expected, in merely ordering him to leave the island. A man in power, who retained something of the religious part of the old Dutch character, removed the banished missionary to the little island of Saba, a dependency upon St. Eustatius, containing about three thousand inhabitants, of whom one-third were whites. There was a respectable church there; but the people had been seventeen years without a minister. They received Brazier with the greatest joy, and governor, council, and people entreated him to take up his abode among them, offering him the church, the parsonage, and a sufficient maintenance. Coke went there, and was delighted with the kindness and simplicity of the people. He informed them what the economy of the Methodists was, and particularly explained to them what he called the "grand and indispensable custom of changing their ministers." They were willing to comply with every thing; and though Brazier had been

ordered by the Conference to Jamaica, Dr. Coke consented to leave him at Saba. But when the governor of St. Eustatius knew where he was, he compelled the government to dismiss him, though with sorrow and reluctance on their part.

Two missionaries had been appointed to Jamaica; but Coke having thus disposed of the one, left the other to divide his labours between Tortola and Santa Cruz, (on which little island the Danish governor promised him all the encouragement in his power,) and proceeded to Jamaica alone, merely to prepare the way. Some of the higher orders, being drunk at the time, insulted him while he was preaching at Kingston, and would have offered some personal indignities to him, if they had not been controuled by the great majority of the congregation; but on the whole he was so well received and hospitably entertained, that he says, in honour of the island, he never visited any place, either in Europe or America, where Methodism had not taken root, in which he received so many civilities as in Jamaica. He went therefrom to America, and from thence returned to England, in full persuasion that the prospects of the society, both in Jamaica and the Leeward Islands, were as favourable as could be desired.

The cost of this spiritual colonization now became serious; for the resources of the Connection did not keep pace with its progress, and its necessarily increased expenditure. The missions could not be supported unless separate funds were raised for the purpose; and those funds could only be drawn

from voluntary contributions. By the request of the Conference, Dr. Coke (never so happy as when he was most actively employed in such service) made a tour of sixteen months in the United Kingdoms, preaching in behalf of the Negroes, for whom these missions were especially designed; and collecting money by these means, and by personal application to such as were likely to contribute; going himself from door to door.* The rebuffs which he frequently met with, did not deter him from the work which he had undertaken; and he obtained enough to discharge the whole debt which had been contracted on this account, and to proceed with the missions upon an extended scale. In the autumn of 1790, he made a third voyage to the Columbian Islands. A chapel had been built at Barbadoes, during his absence, capable of holding some seven hundred persons; but the hopes of those, by whom this building had been directed, had been greater than their foresight. Though the curate at Bridgetown, Mr. Dent, was the only clergyman in all the islands who countenanced the Methodists, and was heartily glad at receiving from them the assistance which he wanted; though the governor was not unfavour-

* A captain in the navy, from whom he obtained a subscription, calling upon an acquaintance of Coke's the same morning, said "Do you know any thing of a little fellow who calls himself Dr. Coke, and who is going about begging money for missionaries to be sent among the slaves?"—"I know him well," was the reply. "He seems," rejoined the captain, "to be a heavenly-minded little devil. He coaxed me out of two guineas this morning."—Drew's Life of Dr. Coke, p. 388.

able to them, and they had begun under such favourable appearances, the preacher had become obnoxious: the nick-name of Hallelujahs had been fixed upon his followers, and they had undergone that sort of opposition, which they dignify by the name of persecution. Persecution, in the true sense of the word, they have since that time suffered in some of the islands; but in these instances the missionary seems to have been protected by the magistrates when he appealed for redress. At St. Vincent's the attempt to civilize the Caribs had altogether failed. This was owing to the French priests at Martinico. The French missionaries have rendered themselves liable to the heavy accusation of sacrificing the interests of Christianity to the political views of their country. Of this their conduct in Canada affords scandalous proofs; and on the present occasion they acted in the same manner. They persuaded the Caribs, who went to Martinico on one of their trading visits, that the Methodists were spies, whom the king of England had sent to explore their land; and as soon as they had finished their errand, they would retire, and an army would be sent to conquer the country. The Caribs had regarded Baxter as their father, till they were deceived by this villainous artifice. They then behaved so sullenly towards him, that he thought it advisable to hasten with his wife out of their power. When Mrs. Baxter took leave of these poor savages, to whose instruction she had vainly devoted herself, she wept bitterly, and prayed that they might

have another call, and might not reject it as they had done this. But among the other casts upon the island the preachers were well received. The negroes, who, in Barbadoes, were remarkably indifferent to religious instruction, here were exceedingly desirous of it; and even the Catholic families showed favour to the missionaries, and sent for Baxter to baptize their children. The prospect was still more favourable at Grenada. Mr. Dent had recently been presented to the living of St. George's in that island; and the governor, General Matthews, requested Dr. Coke to send missionaries there, saying it was his wish that the negroes should be fully instructed, and there would be work enough for their preachers and for the clergy of the island too.

The Methodists were increasing in Antigua; but here a symptom appeared of that enthusiasm of which it is so difficult for Methodism to clear itself, sanctioned as it has been by Wesley. At the baptism of some adults, one of them was so overcome by her feelings that she fell into a swoon; and Dr. Coke, instead of regarding this as a disorder, and impressing upon his disciples the duty of controuling their emotions, spoke of it as a memorable thing, and with evident satisfaction related that, as she lay entranced with an enraptured countenance, all she said for some time was, Heaven! Heaven! Come! Come! It requires more charity and more discrimination than the majority of men possess, not to suspect either the sincerity or the sanity of persons who aim at producing

effects like this by their ministry, or exult in them when they are produced. Not deterred by his former ill success at St. Eustatius, Coke, with the perseverance that characterised him in all his undertakings, made a third visit there, and waited upon the new governor, who had recently arrived from Holland. 'The Dutchman, he says, received him with very great rudeness indeed; but he ought to have considered it as an act of courtesy that he was not immediately sent off the island. The Methodists there were in the habit of regularly holding their class-meetings; and notwithstanding the edict, there were no fewer than eight *exhorters* among them. One of these persons called upon the Doctor, requested him to correspond with them, and promised, in the name of his fellows, punctually to obey all the directions which should be given them concerning the management of the society. He told him also that many of the free blacks of both sexes intended going to St. Kitt's to receive the sacrament at Christmas, from one of the missionaries. Here Dr. Coke met with another instance, which, if he had been capable of learning that lesson, might have taught him how dangerous it is to excite an enthusiastic spirit of religion. The person, who, on his former visits, had entertained him with true hospitality, was in the very depth of despair. "The only reason he gave for his deplorable situation was, that the Lord had very powerfully called him, time after time, to preach, and he had as often resisted the call, till at last he entirely lost a sense of the

favour of God. He seemed to have no hope left. We endeavoured," the Doctor adds, "to raise his drooping head, but all in vain." If this case were known to the persons in office, as in all likelihood it must have been, it would satisfy them that they had done wisely in proscribing a system which produced effects like this. The person in question conceived himself to be in a state of reprobation because he had not broken the laws of the place wherein he lived.

By this time the alloy of Methodism had shown itself in the islands. Dr. Coke commanded respect there by his manners, his education, and his station in life. The missionaries who followed him had none of these advantages; their poverty and their peculiarities provoked contempt in those who had no respect for their zeal, and who perceived all that was offensive in their conduct, and all that was indiscreet, but were insensible of the good which these instruments were producing. Indispensable as religion is to the well-being of every society, its salutary influences are more especially required in countries where the system of slavery is established. If the planters understood their own interest, they would see that the missionaries might be made their best friends: that by their means the evils of slavery might be mitigated; and that, in proportion as the slave was made a religious being, he became resigned to his lot and contented. But one sure effect of that abominable system is, that it demoralizes the masters as much as it brutalizes the slaves. Men whose lives are

evil willingly disbelieve the Gospel if they can; and, with the greater part of mankind, belief and disbelief depend upon volition far more than is generally understood. But if they cannot succeed in this, they naturally hate those who preach zealously against their habitual vices. Among the causes, therefore, which soon made the Methodists unpopular in all or most of the Columbian islands, the first place must be assigned to that hateful licentiousness, which prevails wherever slavery exists: something is to be allowed to a contempt for the preachers; something to the objectionable practices of Methodism, and to a just dislike of what was offensive in its language; and perhaps not a little to the meritorious zeal which the society had shown in England in favour of the abolition of the Slave Trade, when that great question was first agitated with such ardent benevolence on one side, and such fierce repugnance on the other.

While Dr. Coke was in Antigua, Baxter was assaulted at the door of his chapel by some drunken persons of the higher order, who threatened to murder him. His wife and the negroes believed them to be in earnest; the cry which they raised was mistaken for a cry of fire, and the whole town was presently in an uproar. Baxter was informed by the magistrates that the offenders should be punished as they deserved, if he would lodge an information against them. But it was thought best to acknowledge a grateful sense of their protection, and to decline the prosecution. Shortly afterwards, the chapel at St. Vincent's was broken

open by night, not by robbers, but by mischievous and probably drunken persons, who did what mischief they could, and, carrying away the Bible, suspended it from the gallows; a flagitious act, which caused the magistrates to offer a large reward for discovering the perpetrators. This growing ill will was more openly displayed at Jamaica, where a missionary had been appointed, and a chapel erected in Kingston. The preacher's life had been frequently endangered here by an outrageous rabble; and a person who was considered to be the chief of the Methodists narrowly escaped being stoned to death, and was once obliged to disguise himself in regimentals. Attempts were made to pull down the chapel; and when some of the rioters were prosecuted, they were acquitted, Coke says, against the clearest evidence. The most abominable reports were raised against Hammet, the preacher; and as for Dr. Coke, he, they said, had been tried in England for horse-stealing, and had fled the country in order to escape from justice.

Such was the temper of the Jamaica people, when the Doctor, with another missionary in his company, landed at Montego Bay, in the beginning of 1791. A recommendatory letter to a gentleman in the neighbourhood procured them an excellent dinner, but no help in their main design; and they walked the streets, "peeping and enquiring for a place wherein to preach, in vain;" to preach out of doors in that climate while the sun is up, is almost impracticable; and at evening, the only time when the slaves can attend, the heavy

dews render it imprudent and dangerous. Dining, however, at an ordinary the next day, and stating his sorrow that he was prevented from preaching for want of a place, one of the company advised him to apply for a large room, which had originally been the church, served now for assemblies, and was frequently used as a theatre. Here he preached every evening during a short stay, and though a few bucks clapped and encored him, he was on the whole well satisfied with the attention of the congregation*, and the respect with which he was treated. But at Spanish Town and at Kingston he was grossly insulted by a set of profligate young men: their conduct roused in him an emotion which he had never felt in the same degree before, and which, he says, he believed was a spark of the proper spirit of martyrdom; and, addressing himself to these rioters in terms of just reproof, he told them that he was willing — yea, desirous to suffer martyrdom, if the kingdom of Christ might be promoted thereby. The effect which he says that this produced, was undoubtedly assisted by his station in life, which enabled him to appear upon equal terms with the proudest of

* "On the Sunday morning," says Dr. Coke (Journal, page 130), "we went to church; but a little rain falling, the congregation consisted only of half a dozen or thereabouts at the exact time of beginning; on which the minister walked out: if he had condescended to have waited ten minutes longer, we should have been, I believe, about twenty. The Sunday before, also, there had been no service. In some of the parishes of this island there is no church, nor any divine service performed, except the burial of the dead, and christenings and weddings in private houses, though the livings are very lucrative. But I will write no more on this subject, lest I should grow indignant."

his assailants. On another occasion, when he had ended his sermon, he told these persons that he and his brethren were determined to proceed, and to apply to the legal authorities for justice, if such insults and outrages were continued; and if justice were not to be found in Jamaica, they were sure, he said, of obtaining it at home.

The affairs of Methodism in the West Indies were in this state at the time of Mr. Wesley's death. Fourteen preachers were stationed there, of whom two came from the American branch. The number of persons enrolled in the connection then amounted to about six thousand, of whom two-thirds were negroes, and the number of white persons did not exceed two hundred. A more determined spirit of opposition was arising than they had ever experienced in Europe, but they were sure of protection from the home-government, and knew that by perseverance they should make their cause good.

CHAP. XXIX.

SETTLEMENT OF THE CONFERENCE. — MANNERS AND EFFECTS OF METHODISM.

THE year 1784 has been called the grand climacterical year of Methodism, because Wesley then first arrogated to himself an episcopal power; and because in that year the legal settlement of the Conference was effected, whereby provision was made for the government of the society after his death, as long as it should continue.

The Methodist chapels, with the preachers' houses annexed to them, had all been conveyed to trustees for the use of such persons as should be appointed from time to time by John or Charles Wesley, during their lives; by the survivor, and after the death of both, by the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, in London, Bristol, or Leeds. A legal opinion was taken, whether the law would recognize the Conference, unless the precise meaning of the word were defined; the lawyers were of opinion that it would not, and therefore at the next meeting of that body, Mr. Wesley was unanimously desired to draw up a deed which should give a legal specification of the term; the mode of doing it being left entirely to his discretion. The necessity for this was obvious. "Without some authentic deed fixing the meaning

of the term, the moment I died, says he, the Conference had been nothing: therefore any of the proprietors of land on which our preaching houses had been built might have seized them for their own use, and there would have been none to hinder them; for the Conference would have been nobody—a mere empty name."

His first thought was to name some ten or twelve persons. On further consideration he appointed one hundred, believing, he says, "there would be more safety in a greater number of counsellors," and judging these were as many as could meet without too great an expense, and without leaving any circuit deprived of preachers while the Conference was assembled. The hundred persons thus nominated "being preachers and expounders of God's holy Word, under the care of, and in connexion with, the said John Wesley," were declared to constitute the Conference, according to the true intent and meaning of the various deeds in which that term was used; and provision was now made for continuing the succession and identity of this body, wherein the administration of the Methodist Connection was to be vested after the founder's death. They were to assemble yearly at London, Bristol, or Leeds, or any other place which they might think proper to appoint; and their first act was to be, to fill up all vacancies occasioned by death or other circumstances. No act was to be valid unless forty members were present, provided the whole body had not been reduced below that number by death,

or other causes. The duration of the assembly should not be less than five days, nor more than three weeks, but any time between those limits at their discretion. They were to elect a president and secretary from their own number, and the president should have a double vote. Any member absenting himself without leave from two successive conferences, and not appearing on the first day of the third, forfeited his seat by that absence. They had power to admit preachers and expounders upon trial, to receive them into full connection, and to expel any person for sufficient cause; but no person might be elected a member of their body, till he had been twelve months in full connection as a preacher. They might not appoint any one to preach in any of their chapels who was not a member of the Connection, nor might they appoint any preacher for more than three years to one place, except ordained ministers of the Church of England. They might delegate any member or members of their own body to act with full power in Ireland, or any other parts out of the kingdom of Great Britain. Whenever the Conference should be reduced below the number of forty members, and continue so reduced for three years, or whenever it should neglect to meet for three successive years, in either of such cases the Conference should be extinguished; and the chapels and other premises should vest in the trustees for the time being, in trust that they should appoint persons to preach therein. The deed concluded with a provision that nothing which it contained should be construed

so as to extinguish, lessen, or abridge the life estate of John and Charles Wesley in any of the chapels and premises.

At the time when this settlement was made, there were one hundred and ninety-one preachers in full connection; they who were omitted in the list of the Hundred were offended as well as disappointed; and they imputed their exclusion to Dr. Coke, whom many of them regarded with jealousy because of the place which he deservedly held in Mr. Wesley's opinion, and the conspicuous rank which he filled in the society. He was grievously wronged by this suspicion; for he has declared, and there can be no possible grounds for doubting his veracity, that his opinion at the time was, that every preacher in full connection should be a member of the Conference. Wesley acted upon his own judgment; and the reasons which he assigned for determining the number were satisfactory. Five of the excluded preachers, who thought themselves most aggrieved, sent circular letters to those who were in the same case with themselves, inviting them to canvass the business in the ensuing Conference, and, in fact, to form a regular opposition to Mr. Wesley. They had reason to expect that they should be powerfully supported; but when the assembly met, Wesley explained his motives in a manner that carried conviction with it, reproved the persons who had issued the circular letters with great severity, and called upon all those who agreed with him in opinion to stand up; upon which the whole Con-

ference rose, with the exception of the five malcontents. Mr. Fletcher interfered in their behalf, and by his means they were induced to acknowledge that they had sinned; and a verbal promise, according to their own account, was given them, that Mr. Wesley would take measures for putting them on a footing with the rest. He could only mean that they would be appointed members of the Conference as vacancies occurred; and it appears by their own statement also, that they had not patience to wait for this, but, in the course of the year, withdrew from the Connection, complaining of their wrongs, talking of their indisputable rights, and appealing to an original compact which had no existence. On the contrary, Wesley had always taken especial care to assert, as well as to exercise, his authority over the society which he had raised, and the preachers, whom he received as his assistants, not his equals; still less as persons who might oppose and controul him.

Wesley prided himself upon the economy of his society, and upon his management of it. It was the peculiar talent, he said, which God had given him. He possessed that talent beyond all doubt, in a remarkable degree. The constitution of Methodism, like most forms of government, had arisen out of accidents and circumstances: but Wesley had availed himself of these with great skill, and made them subservient to his views and purposes as they arose: whatever power of mind was displayed in the formation of Methodism was his own. In this respect he differs from those

monastic patriarchs, with whom he may most obviously be compared. St. Benedict compiled his rule from elder statutes, modifying them, and adapting them to his own time and country. St. Francis seems to have become the tool of his artful and ambitious disciples; and Loyola was not the architect of the admirable structure which he founded. But the system of Methodism was Wesley's own work. The task of directing it was not so difficult as might at first appear. His rank, his attainments, his abilities, and his reputation, secured for him so decided a superiority, that no person in his own community could, with the slightest prospect of success, dispute it; and in the latter years of his life, that superiority was still farther increased by his venerable age, and the respect which he had then obtained even among strangers. Those who were weary of acting under his direction as preachers, or of observing his rules as members, either withdrew, or were easily dismissed. This is the great advantage which all sects enjoy. They get rid of troublesome spirits and bad subjects; and general society is ready to receive the outcasts.

The quarterly renewal of the band and class tickets afforded a ready means of ejecting unworthy and disobedient members. The terms of admission, therefore, might well be made comprehensive; while these means of cutting short all discordance were in the preacher's hands. Upon this facility of admission Wesley prided himself. "One circumstance," says he, "is quite peculiar to the

Methodists: the terms upon which any person may be admitted into their society. They do not impose, in order to their admission, any opinions whatever. Let them hold particular or general redemption, absolute or conditional decrees; let them be Churchmen or Dissenters, Presbyterians or Independents, it is no obstacle. Let them choose one mode of worship or another, it is no bar to their admission. The Presbyterian may be a Presbyterian still; the Independent or Anabaptist use his own mode of worship; so may the Quaker, and none will contend with him about it. They think, and let think. One condition, and one only, is required,—a real desire to save their souls. Where this is, it is enough; they desire no more. They lay stress upon nothing else. They ask only, Is thy heart herein as my heart? If it be, give me thy hand. Is there any other society in Great Britain or Ireland that is so remote from bigotry? that is so truly of a Catholic spirit? so ready to admit all serious persons without distinction? Where, then, is there such another society? in Europe? in the habitable world? I know none. Let any man show it me that can. Till then, let no one talk of the bigotry of the Methodists." The propriety of thus admitting persons of opposite persuasions, and of bearing with the opposition which they might raise, was once debated in Conference. Mr. Wesley listened patiently to the discussion, and concluded it by saying, "I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from me, than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig

and I wear my own hair; but if he takes his wig off, and begins to shake the powder about my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get quit of him as soon as possible."

Wesley, indeed, well understood the importance of unanimity in his connection; and even before he had taken those decided steps which prepared the way for a separation from the Church, aimed, in many of his regulations, at making the Methodists a peculiar people. For this reason, he required them, like the Quakers, to intermarry among themselves. This point was determined in the first Conference, the want of such a regulation having been experienced. "Many of our members," it was said, "have lately married with unbelievers, even with such as were wholly unawakened; and this has been attended with fatal consequences. Few of these have gained the unbelieving wife or husband. Generally, they have themselves either had a heavy cross for life, or entirely fallen back into the world." In order to prevent such marriages, it was decreed that every preacher should enforce the apostolic caution, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers;" that whoever acted contrary to it should be expelled the society; and that all persons should be exhorted "to take no step in so weighty a matter without consulting the most serious of their brethren." The rule was well designed for the preservation and increase of Methodism; but the language savours strongly of that spiritual pride which sectarism of every kind tends to excite and foster.

This was not the only point in which Wesley imitated the Quakers. He has himself said, that, having remarked among them several parts of Christian practice, he had willingly adopted, with some restrictions, plainness of speech and plainness of dress. In their barbarisms of language, and their superstitious rejection of common forms of speech, he was too well educated and too sensible to follow them; neither did he recommend his followers to imitate them in those little particularities of dress which could answer no end but that of distinguishing them from other people. "To be singular," he said, "merely for singularity's sake, is not the part of a Christian. I do not, therefore, advise you to wear a hat of such dimensions, or a coat of a particular form. Rather, in things that are absolutely indifferent, humility and courtesy require you to conform to the customs of your country; but I advise you to imitate them in the neatness and in the plainness of their apparel. In this are implied two things: that your apparel be cheap, far cheaper than others in your circumstances wear, or than you would wear if you knew not God; that it be grave, not gay, airy, or showy—not in the point of the fashion."—"Shall I be more particular?" he pursues. "Then *I exhort all those who desire me to watch over their souls,* wear no gold, no pearls or precious stones; use no curling of hair or costly apparel, how grave soever. *I advise those who are able to receive this saying,* buy no velvet, no silks, no fine linen, no superfluities, no mere ornaments, though ever so much

in fashion. Wear nothing, though you have it already, which is of a glaring colour, or which is in any kind gay, glistering, or showy; nothing made in the very height of the fashion, nothing apt to attract the eyes of the bystanders. I do not advise women to wear rings, ear-rings, neck-laces, laces (of whatever kind or colour), or ruffles, which, by little and little, may shoot easily from one to twelve inches deep. Neither do I advise men to wear coloured waistcoats, shining stockings, glittering or costly buckles or buttons, either on their coats or in their sleeves, any more than gay, fashionable, or expensive perukes. It is true, these are little, very little things, which are not worth defending; therefore give them up, let them drop: throw them away, without another word."

It was one of the band-rules that rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, and ruffles, were not to be worn; and this rule was ordered by the first Conference to be enforced, particularly with regard to ruffles: band-tickets were not to be given to any persons who had not left them off; and no exempt case was to be allowed, not even of a married woman: "Better one suffer than many," was Mr. Wesley's language at that time. This injunction was afterwards withdrawn; because it was found impracticable, as interfering in a manner not to be borne with domestic affairs. He admitted, therefore, that "women under the yoke of unbelieving parents or husbands (as well as men in office) might be constrained to put on gold or costly apparel; and in cases of this kind," says he,

"plain experience shows, that the baneful influence is suspended; so that, wherever it is not our choice, but our cross, it may consist with godliness, with a meek and quiet spirit, with lowliness of heart, with Christian seriousness." Women, therefore, who were constrained by "self-willed, unreasonable husbands or parents," to do in this respect what otherwise they would not, were held blameless, provided they used "all possible means, arguments, and entreaties to be excused," and complied just "so far as they were constrained, and no farther." Even in this concession, the intolerant spirit of a reformer is betrayed; and no scruple was made at introducing discord into private families, for the sake of an idle fancy which Wesley had taken up in the days of his enthusiasm. He maintained, that curling the hair, and wearing gold, precious stones, and costly apparel, were expressly forbidden in Scripture; and that whoever said there is no harm in these things, might as well say there is no harm in stealing or adultery; a mode of reasoning which would produce no effect so surely as that of confounding all notions of right and wrong.

In spite, however, of his exhortations, those of his own people, who could afford it, "the very people that sate under the pulpit, or by the side of it," were as fashionably adorned as others of their own rank. "This," said Wesley, "is a melancholy truth: I am ashamed of it, but I know not how to help it. I call heaven and earth to witness this day, that it is not my fault. The trumpet

has not given an uncertain sound, for near fifty years last past. O God, thou knowest I have borne a clear and a faithful testimony. In print, in preaching, in meeting the society, I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God; I am therefore clear of the blood of those that will not hear: it lies upon their own heads. I conjure you all who have any regard for *me*, show me, before I go hence, that I have not laboured, even in this respect, in vain, for near half a century. Let me see, before I die, a Methodist congregation, full as plain dressed as a Quaker congregation. Only be more consistent with yourselves: let your dress be *cheap* as well as plain, otherwise you do but trifle with God, and me, and your own souls. I pray let there be no costly silks among you, how grave soever they may be: let there be no Quaker linen, proverbially so called for its exquisite fineness; no Brussels lace; no elephantine hats or bonnets, — those scandals of female modesty. Be all of a piece, dressed from head to foot as persons professing godliness; professing to do every thing, small and great, with the single view of pleasing God."

Whitefield, in the early part of his course, had fallen into an error of this kind; and, for about a year, he says, thought that "Christianity required him to go nasty." But Wesley was always scrupulously neat in his person, and enforced upon his followers the necessity of personal neatness. Toward the end of his life, he publicly declared his regret that he had not made the Methodists

distinguish themselves by a peculiar costume. "I might have been as firm," he says, "(and I now see it would have been far better) as either the people called Quakers, or the Moravian brethren: I might have said, 'this is our manner of dress, which we know is both scriptural and rational. If you join with us, you are to dress as we do; but you need not join us unless you please.' But, alas! the time is now past." Perhaps, if he had attempted this early in his career, he might have succeeded, as well as George Fox; but if, like George Fox, he had taken for his standard the common dress of grave persons, in the middle rank of life, he would have perpetuated a fashion more graceless than that of Quakerism in its rigour. The Quakers are not desirous of increasing their numbers by proselytes; if they were, they would find an inconvenience in their costume: instead of making the entrance easy and imperceptible, so that he who enters scarcely knows when he has passed the line, it places a Rubicon in the way. It has the farther inconvenience, and this they feel and lament, that the desire of getting rid of so peculiar a garb, is one inducement for young members to withdraw from the sect. The latter objection Wesley might have avoided, by choosing a habit at once graceful and convenient: but the former would have greatly impeded his success; and he himself, who compassed sea and land to gain proselytes, would soon have been impatient of such an impediment. Upon his wealthier followers, his exhortations upon this subject produced

little or no effect; but, in the middle and lower classes, of which the great majority consisted, the women took to a mode of dress less formal than that of the Quakers, but almost as plain, and by which they were easily distinguished.* With the men he was less successful: it was asked, in the Conference of 1782, if it were well for the preachers to powder their hair, and to wear artificial curls? and the answer merely said, that "to abstain from both is the more excellent way." A direct prohibition was not thought advisable, because it would not have been willingly obeyed.

Cards, dancing, and the theatres were, of course, forbidden to his disciples. Not contented with such reasons as are valid or plausible for the prohibition, they have collected superstitious anecdotes upon these subjects; and, in a spirit as presumptuous as it is uncharitable, have recorded tales of sudden death, as instances of God's judgement upon card-players and dancing-masters! Innocent was a word which Wesley would never

* In one of his Magazines, Wesley published an extract from a tract called the Refined Courtier; and the following passage was loudly complained of, as inconsistent with the opinions upon this subject which he had repeatedly professed: "Let every one, when he appears in public, be decently clothed, according to his age, and the custom of the place where he lives: he that does otherwise seems to affect singularity. Nor is it sufficient that our garment be made of good cloth; but we should constrain ourselves to follow the garb where we reside, seeing custom is the law and standard of decency in all things of this nature." He paraphrases this in a subsequent number, in order to vindicate it; says that the author is speaking of people of rank; and, that he may get rid of the accusation with a jest, exhorts all lords of the bed-chamber, and maids of honour, to follow the advice. "The whole," says he, "may bear a sound construction, nor does it contradict any thing which I have said or written."

suffer to be applied to any kind of pastime; for he had set his face against all diversions of any kind, and would not even allow the children at school to play. "Those things we have falsely called *innocent*," says one of his correspondents, "are the right eye to be plucked out. If you were besieging strong enemies, and had no hope of conquering but by starving them, would it be *innocent* now and then to throw them a little bread?" Wesley was in nothing more erroneous than in judging of others by himself, and requiring from them a constant attention to spiritual things, and that unremitting stretch of the faculties, which, to him, was become habitual. If he never flagged, it was because he was blessed, above all men, with a continual elasticity of spirits; because the strong motive of ambition was always acting upon him; because perpetual change of place kept his mind and body for ever on the alert; and because, wherever he went, his presence excited a stir among strangers, and made a festival among his friends. Daily change of scene and of society, with a life of activity and exertion, kept him in hilarity as well as health. But it was unreasonable to expect that his followers should have the same happy temperament.

Bishop Hacket's happy motto was, "Serve God, and be cheerful."—"Be serious," was one of Wesley's favourite injunctions. "Be serious;" it was said in the first Conference. "Let your motto be, 'Holiness to the Lord.' Avoid all lightness, as you would avoid hell-fire; and trifling, as you

would cursing and swearing. Touch no woman: be as loving as you will, but the custom of the country is nothing to us."* When the two brothers, John and Charles, were in the first stage of their enthusiasm, they used to spend part of the Sabbath in walking in the fields, and singing psalms. One Sunday, when they were beginning to set the stave, a sense of the ridiculous situation came upon Charles, and he burst into a loud laughter. "I asked him," says John, "if he was distracted, and began to be very angry, and presently after to laugh as loud as he. Nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces, but were forced to go home, without singing another line." Hysterical laughter, and that laughter which is as contagious as the act of yawning, when the company are in tune for it, Wesley believed to be the work of the devil,—one of the many points in which the parallel holds good between the enthusiasm of the Methodists and of the Papists. †

* This passage will not be found in the minutes of the Conference. It is given by Mr. Myles, in his Chronological History of the Methodists, (p. 31. 3d edition,) as a minute relative to practice. This authority will not be questioned, Mr. Myles being a travelling preacher himself, and a distinguished member of the Conference.

† There is a grand diatribe of St. Pachomius against laughing. The beatified Jordan, second general of the Dominicans, treated an hysterical affection of this kind with a degree of prudence and practical wisdom, not often to be found in the life of a Romish saint. "*Cum idem magister duceret secum multos novitios, quos receperat in quodam loco, ubi non erat conventus; accidit quod in quodam hospitio cum Completorium cum eis & aliis suis diceret, unus cœpit ridere; et alii hoc videntes similiter fortiter inceperunt ridere. Quidem autem de sociis magistri incepit eos per signa compescere; at illi magis ac magis ridebant. Tunc dimisso*

He advised his preachers not to converse with any person more than an hour at a time; in general to fix the end of every conversation before they began; to plan it before-hand; to pray before and after it, and to watch and pray during the time. In the same spirit of a monastic legislator also, but to a more practicable and useful end, he exhorted them to watch against what he called *the lust of finishing;* to mortify which, he and his companions at Oxford, he said, frequently broke off* writing in the middle of a sentence, if not in the middle of a word, especially the moment they heard the chapel bell ring. "If nature," said he, "reclaimed, we remembered the word of the heathen.—

Completorio, et dicto benedicite, incepit magister dicere illi socio suo, Frater, quis fecit vos magistrum novitiorum nostrorum? Quid pertinet ad vos eos corrigere? Et conversus ad novitios dixit, carissimi ridete fortiter, et non dimittatis propter fratrem istum: ego do vobis licentiam. Et vere debetis gaudere et ridere, quia exivistis de carcere diaboli et fracta sunt dura vinculi illius, quibus multis annis tenuit vos ligatos. Ridete ergo, carissimi, ridete. At illi in his verbis consolati sunt in animo; et post ridere dissolutè non potuerunt." Acta Sanctorum, 13 Feb. p. 734.

* St. David accustomed his monks to the same kind of alert discipline: if any one heard the bell ring while he was engaged in writing, he instantly left off, though it might be in the middle of a letter. *Veniente autem vesperâ nolæ sonitus audiebatur, et quisque studium suum deserebat, et ad communitatem veniebat. Si vero in auribus alicujus resonabat scripta tunc literæ apice vel etiam dimidiâ literâ eam incompletam dimittebat, et ad communem locum conveniebat cum silentio.*— Acta Sanctorum, March 1st, Vol. i. p. 46.

Stanihurst, in his description of Ireland, relates an instance of this in "an holie and learned abbot called Kanicus," who "was wholly wedded to his book and to devotion; wherein he continued so painful and diligent, as being on a certain time penning a serious matter, and having not fully drawn the fourth vocal, the abbey-bell *ting'd* to assemble the convent to some spiritual exercise; to which he so hastened, as he left the letter in semi-circle-wise unfinished, until he returned back to his book."

ejicienda est hæc mollities animi." Could his rules have been enforced like those of his kindred spirits in the days of papal dominion, he also would have had his followers regular as clock-work, and as obedient, as uniform, and as artificial as they could have been made by the institutions of the Chinese empire, or the monastery of La Trappe. This was not possible, because obedience was a matter of choice: his disciples conformed no farther than they thought good; dismissal was the only punishment which he could inflict, and it was always in their power to withdraw from the Connection. Even his establishment at Kingswood failed of the effect which he had expected from it, though authority was not wanting there; because the system was too rigorous and too monastic for the age and country. The plan of making it a general school for the society was relinquished; but it was continued for the sons of the preachers, and became one of those objects for which the Conference regularly provided at their annual meeting. In the year 1766 he delivered over the management of it to stewards on whom he could depend: "So I have cast," said he, "a heavy load off my shoulders; blessed be God for able and faithful men who will do his work without any temporal reward." The superintendence he still retained; and it was a frequent cause of vexation to him. Maids, masters, and boys, were refractory, sometimes the one, sometimes the other, sometimes all together, so that he talked of letting the burthen drop. On one occasion, he says, "Having told my whole

mind to the masters and servants, I spoke to the children in a far stronger manner than ever I did before. I will kill or cure. I *will* have one or the other,—a Christian school, or none at all." But the necessity of such an asylum induced him to persevere in it; and it was evidently, with all the gross errors of its plan, and all the trouble and chagrin which it occasioned, a favourite institution with the founder. "Trevecca," said he, "is much more to Lady Huntingdon than Kingswood is to *me*. *I* mixes with every thing. It is *my* college, *my* masters, *my* students. I do not speak so of this school. It is not *mine*, but the Lord's." Looking upon himself, however, as the vicegerent, the complacency with which he regarded the design, made amends to him for the frequent disappointment of his hopes. "Every man of sense," he said, "who read the rules, might conclude that a school so conducted by men of piety and understanding would exceed any other school or academy in Great Britain or Ireland." And his amazing credulity whenever *a work of grace* was announced among the boys, was proof against repeated experience, as well as common sense. The boys were taken to see a corpse one day, and, while the impression was fresh upon them, they were lectured upon the occasion, and made to join in a hymn upon death. Some of them being very much affected, they were told that those who were resolved to serve God might go and pray together; and, accordingly, fifteen of them went, and, in Wesley's language, "continued wrestling with

God, with strong cries and tears," till their bed-time. Wesley happened to be upon the spot. The excitement was kept up day after day, by what he calls "strong exhortations," and many gave in their names to him, being resolved, they said, to serve God. It was a wonder that the boys were not driven mad by the conduct of their instructors. These insane persons urged them never to rest till they had obtained a clear sense of the pardoning love of God. This advice they gave them severally, as well as collectively; and some of the poor children actually agreed that they would not sleep till God revealed himself to them, and they had found peace! The scene which ensued was worthy of Bedlam, and might fairly have entitled the promoters to a place there. One of the masters, finding that they had risen from bed, and were hard at prayer, some half-dressed and some almost naked, went and prayed and sung with them, and then ordered them to bed. It was impossible that they could sleep in such a state of delirium; they rose again, and went to the same work; and being again ordered to bed, again stole out, one after another, till, when it was near mid-night, they were all at prayer again. The maids caught the madness, and were upon their knees with the children. This continued all night; and maids and boys went on raving and praying through the next day, till, one after another, they every one fancied at last, that they felt their justification! "In the evening all the maids, and many of the boys, not having been used to so long and violent

speaking, (for this had lasted from Tuesday till Saturday!) were worn out as to bodily strength, and so hoarse, that they were scarce able to speak." But it was added that they were "strong in the Spirit, full of love, and of joy and peace in believing." Most of them were admitted to the Lord's Supper the next day, for the first time: and Wesley inserted the whole monstrous account, with all its details, in his journal; and, in a letter written at the time, affirms that God had sent a shower of grace upon the children! "Thirteen," he says, "found peace with God, and four or five of them were some of the smallest there, not above seven or eight years old!" Twelve months afterwards, there is this notable entry in his journal: "I spent an hour among our children at Kingswood. It is strange! How long shall we be constrained to weave Penelope's web? What is become of the wonderful work of grace which God wrought in them last September? It is gone! It is lost! It is vanished away! There is scarce any trace of it remaining!—Then we must begin again; and in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." On this subject he was incapable of deriving instruction from experience.

Neither did Wesley ever discover the extreme danger of exciting an inflammatory state of devotional feeling. His system, on the contrary, enjoined a perpetual course of stimulants, and lest the watch-nights and the love-feasts, with the ordinary means of class-meetings and band-meetings, should be insufficient, he borrowed from the

Puritans, one of the most perilous practices that ever was devised by enthusiasm; the entering into a covenant, in which the devotee promises and vows to the "most dreadful God," (beginning the address with that dreadful appellation!) to become his covenant servant; and, giving up himself, body and soul, to his service, to observe all his laws, and obey him before all others, "and this to the death!" Mr. Wesley may perhaps have been prejudiced in favour of this practice, because he found it recommended by the non-conformist Richard Allein, whose works had been published by his maternal grandfather, Dr. Annesley; so that he had probably been taught to respect the author in his youth. In the year 1755, he first recommended this covenant; and, after explaining the subject to his London congregation during several successive days, he assembled as many as were willing to enter into the engagement, at the French church in Spitalfields, and read to them the tremendous formula, to which eighteen hundred persons signified their assent by standing up. "Such a night," he says, "I scarce ever saw before: surely the fruit of it shall remain for ever!" From that time it has been the practice among the Methodists, to renew the covenant annually, generally on the first night of the new year, or of the Sunday following. They are exhorted to make it not only in heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing; and to spread the writing with all possible reverence before the Lord, as if they would present it to *him* as their act and deed, and then to set their hands

to it. It is said, that some persons, from a fanatical and frightful notion of making the covenant perfect on their part, have signed it with their own blood!

A practice like this, highly reprehensible as it would always be, might be comparatively harmless, if absolution were a part of the methodistic economy, as well as confession; and if the distinction between venial and deadly sins were admitted, or if things, innocent in themselves, were not considered sinful in their morality. The rules of a monastic order, however austere, are observed in the convent, because there exists an authority which can compel the observance, and punish any disobedience; moreover, all opportunities of infraction or of temptation are, as much as possible, precluded there, and the discipline is regularly and constantly enforced. But they who take the methodistic covenant, have no keeper except their own conscience; that, too, in a state of diseased irritability, often unable to prevent them from lapsing into offences, but sure to exaggerate the most trifling fault, and to avenge even imaginary guilt with real anguish. The struggle which such an engagement is but too likely to produce, may well be imagined; nor can its consequences be doubtful: some would have strength of nerves enough to succeed in stifling their conscience, or, at least, in keeping it down; and they would throw off all religion as burdensome, because they had taken upon themselves a yoke too heavy to be borne: others would lose their senses.

Methodism has sometimes been the cure of madness, and has frequently changed the type of the disease, and mitigated its evils. Sometimes it has obtained credit by curing the malady which it caused; but its remedial powers are not always able to restore the patient, and overstrained feelings have ended in confirmed insanity or in death. When Wesley instructed his preachers that they should throw men into strong terror and fear, and strive to make them inconsolable, he did not consider that all constitutions were not strong enough to stand this moral salivation. The language of his own sermons was sometimes well calculated to produce this effect. "Mine and your desert," said he to his hearers, "is hell: and it is mere mercy, free undeserved mercy, that *we* are not now in unquenchable fire." — "The natural man," said he, "lies in the valley of the shadow of death. Having no inlets for the knowledge of spiritual things, all the avenues of his soul being shut up, he is in gross stupid ignorance of whatever he is most concerned to know. He sees not that he stands on the edge of the pit; therefore he fears it not: he has not understanding enough to fear. He satisfies himself by saying, God is merciful; confounding and swallowing up at once, in that unwieldy idea of mercy, all his holiness and essential hatred of sin — all his justice, wisdom, and truth. God touches him, and now first he discovers his real state. Horrid light breaks in upon his soul — such light as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomless pit, from

the lowest deep, from a lake of fire burning with brimstone." The effect of such sulphurous language may be easily conceived, especially when it was enforced by his manner of addressing himself personally to every individual who chose to apply it to himself: "Art *thou* thoroughly convinced that thou deservest everlasting damnation? Would God do *thee* any wrong if he commanded the earth to open and swallow thee up? — if thou wert now to go down into the pit — into the fire that never shall be quenched?"

The manner in which he insisted upon the necessity of the new birth, was especially dangerous: without this he affirmed that there could be no salvation. "To say that ye cannot be born again," said he, "that there is no new birth but in baptism, is to seal you all under damnation — to consign you to hell, without help, without hope. Thousands do really believe that they have found a *broad way which leadeth* not *to destruction*, 'What danger, (say they,) can a woman be in, that is so *harmless* and so *virtuous?* . What fear is there that so *honest* a man, one of so strict *morality* should miss of heaven? Especially if, over and above all this, they constantly attend on the church and sacrament.' One of these will ask with all assurance, 'What! shall I not do as well as my neighbours?' Yes; as well as your unholy neighbours; as well as your neighbours that die in their sins; for you will all drop into the pit together, into the nethermost hell. You will all lie together in the lake of fire, 'the lake of fire burning with

brimstone.' Then at length you will see (but God grant you may see it before!) the necessity of holiness in order to glory, and, consequently, of the new birth; since none can be holy, except he be born again." And he inveighed bitterly against all who preached any doctrine short of this. "Where lies the uncharitableness," he asked; "on my side, or on yours? I say he may be born again, and so become an heir of salvation; you say he cannot be born again; and, if so, he must inevitably perish: so you utterly block up his way to salvation, and send him to hell, out of mere charity." — "They who do not teach men to walk in the narrow way, — who encourage the easy, careless, harmless, useless creature, the man who suffers no reproach for righteousness sake, to imagine he is in the way to heaven; these are false prophets in the highest sense of the word; these are traitors both to God and man; these are no other than the first-born of Satan, and the eldest sons of Apollyon the destroyer. These are above the rank of ordinary cut-throats; for they murder the souls of men. They are continually peopling the realms of night; and, whenever they follow the poor souls whom they have destroyed, hell shall be moved from beneath to meet them at their coming."

The effect of these violent discourses was aided by the injudicious language concerning good works, into which Wesley was sometimes hurried, in opposition even to his own calmer judgment upon that contested point. "If you had done no harm to any man," said he, "if you had abstained

from all wilful sin, if you had done all the good you possibly could to all men, and constantly attended all the ordinances of God, all this will not keep you from hell, except you be born again." And he attempted to prove, by a syllogism, that "no works done before justification are good, because they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done. "Wherewithal," said he, "shall a sinful man atone for any the least of his sins? With his own Works?—Were they ever so many or holy, they are not his own but God's. But indeed they are all unholy and sinful themselves; so that every one of them needs a fresh atonement."—"If thou couldst do all things well; if from this very hour till death thou couldst perform perfect uninterrupted obedience, even this would not atone for what is past. Yea, the present and the future obedience of all the men upon earth, and all the angels in Heaven, would never make satisfaction to the justice of God for one single sin." Wesley has censured the error of reposing in what he calls the unwieldy idea of God's mercy,—is such an idea of his justice more tenable? If such notions were well founded, whereon would the value of a good conscience consist?—or why should we have been taught and commanded, when we pray, to say —"forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

These were not Wesley's deliberate opinions. He held a saner doctrine *, and the avowal of that

* It was asked in the second Conference—Q. 9. "How can we maintain that all works done before we have a sense of the pardoning

doctrine was what drew upon him such loads of slanderous abuse from the Ultra-Calvinists. Yet he was led to these inconsistencies by the course of his preaching, and the desire of emptying men of their righteousness, as he called it. And if he were thus indiscrete, what was to be expected from his lay preachers, especially from those who were at the same time in the heat of their enthusiasm, and the plenitude of their ignorance? The overstrained feelings which were thus excited, and the rigid doctrine which was preached, tended to produce two opposite extremes of evil. Many would become what, in puritanical language, is called backsliders, and still more would settle into all the hypocritical formalities of puritanism. "Despise not a profession of holiness, says Osborn, because it may be true: but have a care how you trust it, for fear it should be false!"

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love of God, are sin; and as such, an abomination to him? A. The works of him who has heard the Gospel, and does not believe, are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done. And yet we know not how to say, that they are an abomination to the Lord, in him who feareth God, and from that principle does the best he can. — Q. 10. Seeing there is so much difficulty in this subject, can we deal too tenderly with them that oppose us? A. We cannot."

Dr. Hales, Rector of Killasandra, in Ireland, happened to tell Mr. Wesley, that when Bishop Chevenix, (of Waterford,) in his old age, was congratulated on recovering from a fever, the Bishop replied, "I believe I am not long for this world. I have lost all relish for what formerly gave me pleasure; even my books no longer entertain me. There is nothing sticks by me but the recollection of what little good I may have done." One of Mr. Wesley's preachers, who was present, exclaimed at this, "Oh the vain man, boasting of his good works!" Dr. Hales vindicated the good old bishop, and Mr. Wesley silenced the preacher by saying, "Yes, Dr. Hales is right: there is indeed great comfort in the calm remembrance of a life well spent."

The tendency to produce mock humility and spiritual pride, is one of the evil effects of Methodism. It is chargeable also with leading to bigotry, illiberal manners, confined knowledge, and uncharitable superstition. In its insolent language, all unawakened persons, that is to say, all except themselves, or such graduated professors in other evangelical sects as they are pleased to admit *ad eundem*, are contemptuously styled unbelievers. Wesley could not communicate to his followers his own catholic charity; indeed, the doctrine which he held forth was not always consistent with his own better feelings. Still less was he able to impart that winning deportment, which arose, in him, from the benignity of his disposition, and which no Jesuit ever possessed in so consummate a degree by art, as he by nature. The circle to which he would have confined their reading was narrow enough; his own works, and his own series of abridgements, would have constituted the main part of a Methodist's library. But in this respect the zeal of the pupils exceeded that of the master, and Wesley actually gave offence by printing Prior's Henry and Emma in his Magazine. So many remonstrances were made to him upon this occasion, that he found it necessary, in a subsequent number, to vindicate himself, by urging that there was nothing in the poem contrary to religion, nothing which could offend the chastest ear; that many truly religious men and women had read it and profited thereby; that it was one of the finest poems in the language, both

for expression and sentiment; and that whoever could read it without tears must have a stupid unfeeling heart. However, he concluded, I do not know that any thing of the same kind will appear in any of the following Magazines."

In proportion as Methodism obtained ground among the educated classes, its direct effects were evil. It narrowed their views and feelings; burthened them with forms; restricted them from recreations which keep the mind in health; discouraged, if it did not absolutely prohibit, accomplishments that give a grace to life; separated them from general society; substituted a sectarian in the place of a catholic spirit; and, by alienating them from the national church, weakened the strongest cement of social order, and loosened the ties whereby men are bound to their native land. It carried disunion and discord into private life, breaking up families and friendships. The sooner you weaned your affections from those who, not being awakened, were of course in the way to perdition—the sooner the sheep withdrew from the goats, the better. Upon this head the monks have not been more remorseless than the Methodists.* Wesley has said in

* What an old writer says of the Independents in the time of the Commonwealth, is perfectly applicable to this worst part of Methodism. "They take all other Christians to be heathens. These are those great pretenders to the Spirit, into whose party does the vilest person living no sooner adscribe himself, but he is *ipso facto* dubbed a saint, hallowed and dear to God. These are the confidents who can design the minute the place, and the means of their conversion:—a schism full of spiritual disdain, incharity, and high imposture, if any such there be on earth."—A Character of England. Scott's Somers's Tracts, vol. vii. p. 180.

one of his sermons that, how frequently parents should converse with their children when they are grown up, is to be determined by Christian prudence. "This also," says he, "will determine how long it is expedient for children, if it be at their own choice, to remain with their parents. In general, if they do not fear God, you should leave them as soon as is convenient. But, wherever you are, take care (if it be in your power) that they do not want the necessaries or conveniences of life. As for all other relations, even brothers or sisters, if they are of the world, you are under no obligation to be intimate with them: you may be civil and friendly at a distance." What infinite domestic unhappiness must this abominable spirit have occasioned!

Mr. Wesley's notions concerning education must also have done great evil. No man was ever more thoroughly ignorant of the nature of children. "Break their wills betimes," he says: "begin this work before they can run alone, before they can speak plain, perhaps before they can speak at all. Whatever pains it costs, break the will if you would not damn the child. Let a child from a year old be taught to fear the rod and to cry softly; from that age make him do as he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to effect it. If you spare the rod you spoil the child. If you do not conquer, you ruin him. Break his will now, and his soul shall live, and he will probably bless you to all eternity." He exhorts parents never to commend their children for any thing; and says, "that in particular they should labour to convince

them of atheism, and show them that they do not know God, love him, delight in him, or enjoy him, any more than do the beasts that perish!" If Wesley had been a father himself, he would have known that children are more easily governed by love than by fear. There is no subject, that of government excepted, upon which so many impracticable or injurious systems have been sent into the world, as that of education; and, among bad systems, that of Wesley is one of the very worst.

The rigid doctrine which he preached concerning riches, being only one degree more reasonable than that of St. Francis, prevented Methodism from extending itself as it otherwise might have done, among those classes where these notions would have been acted upon by zealous mothers. When Wesley considered the prodigious increase of his society, "from two or three poor people, to hundreds, to thousands, to myriads," he affirmed that such an event, considered in all its circumstances, had not been seen upon earth since the time that St. John went to Abraham's bosom. But he perceived where the principle of decay was to be found. "Methodism," says he, "is only plain scriptural religion guarded by a few prudential regulations. The essence of it is holiness of heart and life: the circumstantials all point to this; and, as long as they are joined together in the people called Methodists, no weapon formed against them shall prosper. But if ever the circumstantial parts are despised, the essential will soon be lost; and if ever the essential parts should evaporate, what

remains will be dung and dross. I fear, wherever riches have increased, the essence of religion has decreased in the same proportion. Therefore I do not see how it is possible, in the nature of things, for any revival of true religion to continue long. For religion must necessarily produce both industry and frugality, and these cannot but produce riches. But as riches increase so will pride, anger, and love of the world in all its branches. How then is it possible that Methodism, that is, a religion of the heart, though it flourishes now as a green bay-tree, should continue in this state? For the Methodists in every place grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionably increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away. Is there no way to prevent this—this continual decay of pure religion? We ought not to prevent people from being diligent and frugal; we *must* exhort all Christians to gain all they can, and to save all they can; that is, in effect, to grow rich. What way, then, can we take, that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way, and there is no other under heaven. If those who *gain* all they can, and *save* all they can, will likewise *give* all they can, then the more they gain the more they will grow in grace, and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven."

Upon this subject Wesley's opinions were inconsistent with the existing order of society.

"Every man," he said, "ought to provide the plain necessaries of life for his wife and children, and to put them into a capacity of providing these for themselves when he is gone; I say, *these*—the *plain necessaries of life*, not delicacies, not superfluities; for it is no man's duty to furnish them with the means either of luxury or idleness. The designedly procuring more of this world's goods than will answer the foregoing purposes; the labouring after a larger measure of worldly substance; a larger increase of gold and silver; the laying up any more than these ends require, is expressly and absolutely forbidden." And he maintained, that whoever did this practically denied the faith, was worse than an African infidel, became an abomination in the sight of God, and purchased for himself hell-fire." How injurious, if such opinions were reduced to practice, they would prove to general industry, and how incompatible they were with the general welfare of the world, Wesley seems not to have regarded. Not less enthusiastic in this respect than Francis or Loyola, and not less sincere also, he exclaimed: "I call God to record upon my soul, that I advise no more than I practise. I do, blessed be God, gain, and save, and give all I can; and, I trust in God, I shall do, while the breath of life is in my nostrils."

This was strictly true; Wesley had at heart the advice which he gave.* He dwelt upon it with

* Upon this principle he began in his youth, and acted upon it throughout his long life. "This," said he, in a sermon, "was the

great earnestness in one of his last sermons a few months only before his death. "After you have gained all you can," said he, "and saved all you can, wanting for nothing, spend not one pound, one shilling, or one penny, to gratify either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life, or for any other end than to please and glorify God. Having avoided this rock on the right hand, beware of that on the left. *Hoard nothing.* Lay up no treasure on earth, but *give all you can,* that is, all you have. I defy all the men upon earth, yea, all the angels in heaven, to find any other way of extracting the poison from riches. After having served you between sixty and seventy years, with dim eyes, shaking hands, and tottering feet, I give you this advice, before I sink into the dust. I am pained for you that are rich in this world. You who receive five hundred pounds a year, and spend only two hundred, do you give three hundred back to God? If not, you certainly rob God of that three hundred. You who receive two

practice of all the young men at Oxford who were called Methodists. For example: one of them had, thirty pounds a year; he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two-and-thirty. The third year he received ninety pounds, and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received an hundred and twenty pounds; still he lived as before on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor ninety-two." It was of himself he spoke. It is affirmed that, in the course of his life, he gave away not less than thirty thousand pounds; and the assertion is probably well founded. "All the profit of his literary labours, all that he received or could collect, (and it amounted, says Mr. Nichols, to an immense sum, for he was his own printer and bookseller,) was devoted to charitable purposes."

hundred and spend but one, do you give God the other hundred? If not, you rob him of just so much. 'Nay, may I not do what I will with my own?' Here lies the ground of your mistake. It is not your *own*. It cannot be, unless you are lord of heaven and earth.' 'However I must provide for my children.' Certainly: but how? By making them rich? Then you will probably make them heathens, as some of you have done already. Secure them enough to live on; not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry. And if you have not children, upon what scriptural or rational principle can you leave a groat behind you more than will bury you? Oh! leave nothing behind you! Send all you have before you into a better world! Lend it, lend it all unto the Lord, and it shall be paid you again. Haste, haste, my brethren, haste, lest you be called away before you have settled what you have on this security. When this is done, you may boldly say, 'Now I have nothing to do but to die! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit! Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly!'"

There were times when Wesley perceived and acknowledged how little real reformation had been effected in the great body of his followers: "Might I not have expected," said he, "a general increase of faith and love, of righteousness and true holiness; yea, and of the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, fidelity, goodness, temperance?—Truly, when I saw what God had done among his people between forty and fifty years ago, when I saw them warm in

their first love, magnifying the Lord, and rejoicing in God their Saviour, I could expect nothing less than that all these would have lived like angels here below; that they would have walked as continually seeing him that is invisible, having constant communion with the Father and the Son, living in eternity, and walking in eternity. I looked to see 'a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;' in the whole tenor of their conversation 'showing forth his praise who had called them into his marvellous light.'" But, instead of this, it brought forth error in ten thousand shapes. It brought forth enthusiasm, imaginary inspiration, ascribing to the all-wise God all the wild, absurd, self-inconsistent dreams of a heated imagination. It brought forth pride. It brought forth prejudice, evil-surmising, censoriousness, judging and condemning one another; all totally subversive of that brotherly love which is the very badge of the Christian profession, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God. It brought forth anger, hatred, malice, revenge, and every evil word and work; all direful fruits, not of the Holy Spirit, but of the bottomless pit. It brought forth such base grovelling affections, such deep earthly-mindedness as that of the poor heathens, which occasioned the lamentation of their own poet over them: *O curvæ in terras animæ et cœlestium inanes!* "O souls bowed down to earth, and void of God!" And he repeated, from the pulpit, a remark which had been made upon the Methodists by one whom

he calls a holy man, that "never was there before a people in the Christian Church who had so much of the power of God among them, with so little self-denial."

Mr. Fletcher also confirms this unfavourable representation, and indicates one of its causes. There were members of the Society, he said, who spoke in the most glorious manner of Christ, and of their interest in his complete salvation, and yet were indulging the most unchristian tempers, and living in the greatest immoralities: "For some years," said he, "I have suspected there is more imaginary than unfeigned faith in most of those who pass for believers. With a mixture of indignation and grief have I seen them carelessly follow the stream of corrupt nature, against which they should have manfully wrestled; and when they should have exclaimed against their antinomianism, I have heard them cry out against the legality of their wicked hearts, which, they said, still suggested they were to *do something* in order to salvation." Antinomianism, he said, was, in general, "a motto better adapted to the state of professing congregations, societies, families, and individuals, than *holiness unto the Lord*, the inscription that should be even upon our horses' bells." He saw what evil had been done by "making much ado about *finished salvation*." "The smoothness of our doctrine," said he, "will atone for our most glaring inconsistencies. We have so whetted the antinomian appetite of our hearers, that they swallow down almost any thing."

Against this error, to which the professors of sanctity so easily incline, Wesley earnestly endeavoured to guard his followers. But if on this point he was, during the latter, and indeed the greater part of his life, blameless, it cannot be denied that his system tended to produce more of the appearance than of the reality of religion. It dealt too much in sensations, and in outward manifestations of theopathy; it made religion too much a thing of display, an affair of sympathy and confederation; it led persons too much from their homes and their closets; it imposed too many forms; it required too many professions; it exacted too many exposures. And the necessary consequence was, that many, when their enthusiasm abated, became mere formalists, and kept up a Pharisaical appearance of holiness, when the whole feeling had evaporated.

It was among those classes of society whose moral and religious education had been blindly and culpably neglected, that Methodism produced an immediate beneficial effect; and, in cases of brutal depravity and habitual vice, it often produced a thorough reformation, which could not have been brought about by any less powerful agency than that of religious zeal. "Sinners of every other sort," said a good old clergyman, "have I frequently known converted to God: but an habitual drunkard I have never known converted."—"But I," says Wesley, "have known five hundred, perhaps five thousand." To these moral miracles he appealed in triumph as unde-

niable proofs that Methodism was an extraordinary work of God. "I appeal," said he, "to every candid unprejudiced person, whether we may not at this day discern all those signs (understanding the words in a spiritual sense) to which our Lord referred John's disciples, 'The blind receive their sight.' Those who were blind from their birth, unable to see their own deplorable state, and much more to see God, and the remedy he has prepared for them, in the Son of his love, now see themselves, yea, and 'the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.' The eyes of their understanding being now opened, they see all things clearly. 'The deaf hear.' Those that were before utterly deaf to all the outward and inward calls of God, now hear not only his providential calls, but also the whispers of his grace. 'The lame walk.' Those who never before arose from the earth, or moved one step toward heaven, are now walking in all the ways of God; yea, running the race that is set before them. 'The lepers are cleansed.' The deadly leprosy of sin, which they brought with them into the world, and which no art of man could ever cure, is now clean departed from them. And surely, never, in any age or nation since the Apostles, have those words been so eminently fulfilled, — 'the poor have the Gospel preached unto them,' as they are at this day. At this day, the Gospel leaven, faith working by love, inward and outward holiness, or (to use the terms of St. Paul) righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, hath so spread in va-

rious parts of Europe, particularly in England, Scotland, Ireland, in the Islands, in the north and south from Georgia to New England and Newfoundland, that sinners have been truly converted to God, thoroughly changed both in heart and in life, not by tens, or by hundreds only, but by thousands, yea, by myriads. The fact cannot be denied: we can point out the persons, with their names and places of abode; and yet the wise men of the world, the men of eminence, the men of learning and renown, cannot imagine what we mean by talking of any extraordinary work of God."

Forcible examples are to be found of this true conversion, this real regeneration; as well as many affecting instances of the support which religion, through the means of Methodism, has given in the severest afflictions*, and of the peace and contentment† which it has afforded to those who

* In Dr. Coke's History of the West Indies, there is one remarkable instance, but it is too painful to be repeated.

† Of this there is a beautiful example in a letter written to Mr. Wesley by one of his female disciples, who was employed in the Orphan-house at Newcastle. "I know not," she says, "how to agree to the *not working*. I am still unwilling to take any thing from any body. I work out of choice, having never yet learned how a woman can be idle and innocent. I have had as blessed times in my soul sitting at work, as ever I had in my life; especially in the night-time, when I see nothing but the light of a candle and a white cloth, hear nothing but the sound of my own breath, with God in my sight and heaven in my soul, I think myself one of the happiest creatures below the skies. I do not complain that God has not made me some fine thing, to be set up to be gazed at; but I can heartily bless him, that he has made me just what I am, a creature capable of the enjoyment of himself. If I go to the window and look out, I see the moon and stars; I meditate a while on the silence of the night, consider this world as a beautiful structure, and

without it would have been forlorn and hopeless. Many, perhaps most of these conversions, were produced by field-preaching; and it is probable, therefore, that Methodism did more good in its earlier than in its latter days, when preaching in the open air was gradually disused, as chapels were multiplied. The two brothers, and the more zealous of their followers, used at first also to frequent Bedlam and the prisons, for the purpose of administering consolation to those who stood most in need of it. When Methodism was most unpopular, admission at these places was refused them, which occasioned Wesley to exclaim, "So we are forbid to go to Newgate for fear of making them wicked, and to Bedlam for fear of driving them mad!" In both places, and in hospitals also, great good might be effected by that zeal which the Methodists possess, were it tempered with discretion. If they had instituted societies to discharge such painful offices of humanity as are performed by the *Sœurs de la Charité* in France, and by the Beguines of Brabant and Flanders, the good which they might have effected would have been duly appreciated and rewarded by public opinion. It is

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the work of an almighty hand; then I sit down to work again, and think myself one of the happiest of beings in it."

Both the feeling and the expression in the letter are so sweet, that the reader will probably be as sorry as I was to discover that this happy state of mind was not permanent. In a letter of Wesley's written three years afterwards, he says "I know not what to do more for poor Jenny Keith, (that was her name). Alas! from what a height is she fallen! What a burning and shining light was she six or seven years ago! But thus it ever was. Many of the first shall be last, and many of the last first."

remarkable, that none of their abundant enthusiasm should have taken this direction, and that so little use should have been made of the opportunity when the prisons were again opened to them. The Wesleys appear not to have repeated their visits after the exclusion. One of their followers, by name Silas Told, a weak, credulous, and, notwithstanding his honest zeal, not always a credible man, attended at Newgate for more than twenty years: his charity was bestowed almost exclusively upon condemned criminals. After his death he had no successor in this dismal vocation, and the honour of having shown in what manner a prison may be made a school of reformation, was reserved for Mrs. Fry and the Quakers.

In estimating the effects of Methodism, the good which it has done indirectly must not be overlooked. As the Reformation produced a visible reform in those parts of Christendom where the Romish Church maintained its supremacy, so, though in a less degree, the progress of Wesley's disciples has been beneficial to our Establishment, exciting in many of the parochial clergy the zeal which was wanting. Where the clergy exert themselves, the growth of Methodism is checked; and perhaps it may be said to be most useful where it is least successful. To the impulse also, which was given by Methodism, that missionary spirit may be ascribed which is now carrying the light of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth. In no way can religious zeal be so beneficially directed as in this.

Some evil also, as well as some good, the Methodists have indirectly caused. Though they became careful in admitting lay-preachers themselves, the bad example of suffering any ignorant enthusiast to proclaim himself a minister of the gospel, found numerous imitators. The number of roving adventurers* in all the intermediate grades between knavery and madness, who took to preaching as a thriving trade, brought an opprobrium upon religion itself; and when an attempt was made at last to put an end to this scandal, a most outrageous and unreasonable cry was raised, as if the rights of conscience were invaded.† Perhaps the manner in which Methodism has familiarized the lower classes to the work of combining in associations, making rules for their own governance, raising funds,

* One magistrate in the county of Middlesex licensed fourteen hundred preachers in the course of five years. Of six-and-thirty persons who obtained licences at one sessions, six spelled "ministers of the gospel" in six different ways, and seven signed their mark! One fellow, who applied for a licence, being asked if he could read, replied, "Mother reads, and I 'spounds and 'splains."

† A writer in the Gospel Magazine says, concerning Lord Sidmouth's well-meant bill, "By the grace of God I can speak for one. If in any place I am called to preach, and cannot obtain a licence, I shall feel myself called upon to break through all restrictions, even if death be the consequence; for I know that God will avenge his own elect against their persecutors, let them be who they may. The men that are sent of God must deliver their message, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear; whether they can obtain a licence or not. If God opens their mouths, none can shut them."—Every man his own Pope, and his own lawgiver! These are days in which authority may safely be defied in such cases; but there is no reason to doubt that the man who speaks thus plainly would not have been as ready to break the laws as to defy them. Had he been born in the right place and time, he would have enjoyed a glorification in the Grass-market.

and communicating from one part of the kingdom to another, may be reckoned among the incidental evils which have resulted from it; but in this respect it has only facilitated a process to which other causes had given birth. The principles of Methodism are strictly loyal; and the language which has been held by the Conference, in all times of political disturbance, have been highly honourable to the society, and in strict conformity to the intentions of the founder. On the other hand, the good which it has done, by rendering men good civil subjects, is counteracted by separating them from the Church. This tendency Wesley did not foresee; and when he perceived it, he could not prevent it. But his conduct upon this point was neither consistent nor ingenuous. Soon after he had taken the memorable step of consecrating Dr. Coke as an American bishop, he arrogated to himself the same authority for Scotland as for America; and this, he maintained, was not a separation from the Church; "not from the Church of Scotland," said he, "for we were never connected therewith; not from the Church of England, for this is not concerned in the steps which are taken in Scotland. Whatever, then, is done, either in America or Scotland, is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this: I have many objections against it." He had been led toward a separation imperceptibly, step by step; but it is not to his honour that he affected to deprecate it to the last, while he was evidently bringing it about by the measures which he pursued.

In the latter end of his life, the tendency to separation was increased by the vexatious manner in which some Lincolnshire magistrates enforced the letter of the Toleration Act. They insisted, that as the Methodists professed themselves members of the Church, they were not within the intention of the act; they refused to license their chapels therefore, unless they declared themselves dissenters: and when some of the trustees were ready to do this, they were told that this was not sufficient by itself; they must declare also, that they scrupled to attend the service and sacrament of the Church, the Act in question having been made for those only who entertained such scruples. This system of injurious severity did not stop here. Understanding in what manner these magistrates interpreted the law, some informers took advantage of the opportunity, and enforced the Conventicle Act against those who had preaching or prayer-meetings in their houses: the persons thus aggrieved were mostly in humble circumstances, so that they were distressed to pay the fine; and when they appealed to the quarter-sessions, it was in vain; the magistrates had no power to relieve them. Mr. Wesley was irritated at this, and wrote to the Bishop of the diocese in a tone which he had never before assumed. — "My Lord," said he, in his letter, "I am a dying man, having already one foot in the grave. Humanly speaking, I cannot long creep upon the earth, being now nearer ninety than eighty years of age. But I cannot die in peace before I have

discharged this office of Christian love to your lordship. I write without ceremony, as neither hoping nor fearing any thing from your lordship, or from any man living. And I ask, in the name and in the presence of Him, to whom both you and I are shortly to give an account, why do you trouble those that are quiet in the land, — those that fear God and work righteousness? Does your lordship know what the Methodists are? that many thousands of them are zealous members of the church of England, and strongly attached, not only to His Majesty, but to his present ministry? Why should your lordship, setting religion out of the question, throw away such a body of respectable friends? Is it for their religious sentiments? Alas! my lord, is this a time to persecute any man for conscience sake? I beseech you, my lord, do as you would be done to. You are a man of sense; you are a man of learning; nay, I verily believe (what is of infinitely more value) you are a man of piety. Then think and let think. I pray God to bless you with the choicest of his blessings." * These circumstances occurred a few months only before his death. His friends advised that an application should be made to Parliament for the repeal of the Conventicle Act. In some shape, it can-

* In the life of Wesley, by Dr. Coke, and Mr. Moore, there is a letter upon this occasion, in a more angry strain. Probably Mr. Wesley upon reflection saw that he had written in an unbecoming manner, and substituted in its place that which I have copied from the life by Dr. Whitehead. The official biographers indeed had in their hands such private documents only, as had not been entrusted to the doctor.

not be doubted but that relief would have been afforded, and several members of the House of Commons, who respected Mr. Wesley, would have stirred in his behalf. But his growing infirmities prevented him from exerting himself upon this business as he would otherwise have done.

CHAP. XXX.

WESLEY IN OLD AGE.

"LEISURE and I," said Wesley, "have taken leave of one another. I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged to me." This resolution was made in the prime of life, and never was resolution more punctually observed. "Lord, let me not live to be useless!" was the prayer which he uttered after seeing one whom he had long known as an active and useful magistrate, reduced by age to be "a picture of human nature in disgrace, feeble in body and mind; slow of speech and understanding." He was favoured with a constitution vigorous beyond that of ordinary men, and with an activity of spirit which is even rarer than his singular felicity of health and strength. Ten thousand cares of various kinds, he said, were no more weight or burden to his mind, than ten thousand hairs were to his head. But in truth his only cares were those of superintending the work of his ambition, which continually prospered under his hands. Real cares he had none; no anxieties, no sorrows, no griefs which touched him to the quick. His manner of life was the most favourable that could have been devised for longevity. He rose early,

and lay down at night with nothing to keep him waking, or trouble him in sleep. His mind was always in a pleasurable and wholesome state of activity, he was temperate in his diet, and lived in perpetual locomotion: and frequent change of air is perhaps, of all things, that which most conduces to joyous health and long life.

The time which Mr. Wesley spent in travelling was not lost. "History, poetry, and philosophy," said he, "I commonly read on horseback, having other employment at other times." He used to throw the reins on his horse's neck; and in this way he rode, in the course of his life, above a hundred thousand miles, without any accident of sufficient magnitude to make him sensible of the danger which he incurred. His friends, however, saw the danger; and in the sixty-ninth year of his age, they prevailed upon him to travel in a carriage, in consequence of a hurt which had produced a hydrocele. The ablest practitioners in Edinburgh were consulted upon his case, and assured him there was but one method of cure. "Perhaps but one natural one," says he, "but I think God has more than one method of healing either the soul or the body." He read, upon the subject, a treatise which recommends a seton or a caustic, "but I am not inclined," said he, "to try either of them; I know a physician that has a shorter cure than either one or the other." After two years however, he submitted to an operation *,

* "Mr. Wathen performed the operation, and drew off something more than a half pint of a thin, yellow, transparent water; with this came out (to his no small surprise) a pearl of the size of a small shot,

and obtained a cure. A little before this, he notices in his Journal, the first night that he had ever lain awake; "I believe," he adds, "few can say this; in seventy years I never lost one night's sleep."

He lived to preach at Kingswood under the shade of trees which he had planted; and he outlived the lease of the Foundery*, the place which had been the cradle of Methodism. In 1778, the head-quarters of the society were removed to the City Road, where a new chapel was built upon ground leased by the city. Great multitudes assembled to see the ceremony of laying the foundation, so that Wesley could not, without much difficulty, get through the press to lay the first stone, in which his name and the date were inserted upon a plate of brass: "This was laid by John Wesley on April 1. 1777." "Probably," says he, "this will be seen no more by any human eye, but will remain there till the earth and the works thereof are burnt up." Charles, having long ceased to itinerate, used to officiate here, and the lay-preachers, who were always jealous of him,

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which he supposed might be one cause of the disorder, by occasioning a conflux of humours to the part."— Journal, xvii. p. 8.— What an extraordinary relic would this *pearl* have been, had it been extracted from a Romish saint! I know not whether there be any other case recorded of physical *Oystracism*.

* Silas Told describes this in the year 1740 as "a ruinous place, with an old pantile covering, a few rough deal boards put together to constitute a temporary pulpit, and several other decayed timbers, which composed the whole structure." No doubt it was improved afterwards. Mr. Wesley's preaching hours, when he began there, were five in the morning and seven in the evening, for the convenience of the labouring part of the congregation. The men and women sate apart, and there were no pews, or difference of benches, or appointed place for any person.

were greatly offended, because he excluded them from the pulpit by serving the chapel twice on Sundays, when John was not in town. They complained of this as invidious and derogatory to themselves, and Wesley so far yielded to their importunities as to promise that one of their body should preach when Charles could not, an arrangement which preferred them to the clergymen in the connection. Charles was hurt at this concession of his brother's, and with good reason. He represented that many persons, who had subscribed towards the building of the chapel, and were friends to Methodism, were yet not members of the society, but true churchmen; and that, from regard to them and to the Church, not out of ill will to the preachers, he wished the Church service to be continued there; for this also was made a matter of complaint against him. Next to his brother, he affirmed, he had the best right to preach there; and he used it because he had so short a time to preach any where. "I am sorry," said he, "you yielded to the lay-preachers: I think them in the greatest danger through pride. They affect to believe that I act as a clergyman in opposition to them. If there was no man above them, what would become of them! how would they tear one another in pieces! Convince them, if you can, that they want a clergyman over them to keep them and the flock together. But rather persuade them, if you can, to be the least, not the greatest, and then all will be right again. You have no alternative but to conquer that spirit, or

be conquered by it.—The preachers do not love the Church of England. What must be the consequence when we are gone? A separation is inevitable. Do you not wish to keep as many good people in the Church as you can? Something might be done to save the remainder, if you had resolution and would stand by me, as firmly as I will by you."

This ill-temper in the preachers produced a schism in the connection. An Irish clergyman, being at Bath on account of his wife's health, was desired by Mr. Wesley to preach every Sunday evening in the Methodist chapel, as long as he remained there. As soon as Wesley had left that city, a lay-preacher, by name Mc Nab, raised a sort of rebellion upon this ground, saying it was the common cause of all the lay-preachers, for they were appointed by the Conference, not by Mr. Wesley, and they would not suffer the clergy to ride over their heads. This touched Mr. Wesley where he was most sensitive. He set out for Bath, summoned the society, and read to them a paper* which he had drawn up many years before, upon a somewhat similar occasion, and which had been read to the Conference of 1766. He observed that the rules of the preachers were fixed by him before any Conference existed, and that the twelfth rule stated, "above all, you are to preach *when* and *where* I appoint." This fundamental rule Mc Nab had opposed, and therefore he ex-

* The substance of this paper has been previously given, Vol. ii. pp. 198—200.

pelled him. But the mutinous preacher had "thrown wildfire among the people, and occasioned anger, jealousies, judging each other, backbiting, and tale-bearing without end:" strange weeds to spring up in the garden of Christian perfection!

On this occasion, as on all others, when his authority was invaded, Wesley acted with promptitude and decision. He had great talents for government; and even when it was necessary, to conform to circumstances which he could not controul, he understood how important it was that he should never appear to yield. But though, by his presence of mind and skill in directing the minds of men, he contrived in difficult circumstances to save himself from any sacrifice of pride, he was not always so successful on the score of principle; for his attachment to the Church was sacrificed to the desire of extending and preserving his power; contented if he could stave off the separation as long as he lived, he took measures which prepared for it, just as he provided a system by which the constitution of his society should become republican after his death, satisfied with maintaining his authority over it as a monarch during his life.

The remarkable talents with which the Wesley family were endowed, manifested themselves in the third generation as strikingly as in the second. One of the nieces of Mr. Wesley, named Mehetabel after her mother, was that Mrs. Wright who attained to such excellence as a modeller in wax, and who is said to have acted with great dexterity in conveying

treasonable intelligence to the Americans during the war. The two sons of Charles were among the most distinguished musicians of their age. Their father, perceiving the decided bent of their genius, very properly permitted them to follow it, and make the science of music their profession. In a letter to his brother, he said, "I am clear, without doubt, that my sons' concert is after the will and order of Providence." When John printed this letter after his brother's death, he added, in a note, "I am *clear* of another mind." Dr. Coke also looked upon the concerts which were performed in Charles Wesley's own house as being highly dishonourable to God, and considered him as criminal "by reason of his situation in the church of Christ." But upon mature consideration the Doctor saw reason to alter this severe opinion. "It has established them," said Charles, "as musicians, in a safe and honourable way. We do not repent that we did not make a show or advantage of our swans. They may still make their fortunes if I will venture them into the world; but I never wish them rich: you also agree with me in this. Our good old father neglected every opportunity of selling our souls to the devil."

One of these brothers became a papist, to the sore grief of his parents. Upon this occasion John addressed a letter to them, saying, he doubted not that they were in great trouble, because their son had "changed his religion;" and, deducing a topic of consolation from the inaccuracy of that expression, "Nay," said he, "he has changed his

opinions and *mode of worship*, but that is not *religion*; it is quite another thing. Has he then, you may ask, sustained no loss by the change? Yes; unspeakable loss: because his new opinions and mode of worship are so unfavourable to religion, that they make it, if not impossible to one that knew better, yet extremely difficult. What, then, is religion? It is happiness in God, or in the knowledge and love of God. It is 'faith working by love,' producing 'righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' In other words, it is a heart and life devoted to God; or communion with God the Father and the Son; or the mind which was in Christ Jesus, enabling us to walk as he walked. Now, either he has this religion, or he has not: if he has, he will not finally perish, notwithstanding the absurd unscriptural opinions he has embraced, and the superstitious and idolatrous modes of worship. But these are so many shackles which will greatly retard him in running the race that is set before him. If he has not this religion; if he has not given God his heart, the case is unspeakably worse: I doubt if he ever will; for his new friends will continually endeavour to hinder him, by putting something else in its place, by encouraging him to rest in the form, notions, or externals, without being born again; without having Christ in him, the hope of glory; without being renewed in the image of Him that created him. This is the deadly evil. I have often lamented that he had not this holiness, without which no man can see the Lord. But though he

had it not, yet, in his hours of cool reflection, he did not hope to go to heaven without it; but now he is, or will be taught, that, let him only have a right *faith*, (that is, such and such notions,) and add thereunto such and such *externals*, and he is quite safe. He may indeed roll a few years in purging fire, but he will surely go to heaven at last."

The father felt this evil so deeply, that, it is asserted, one of the last things he said upon his death-bed was to declare his forgiveness of the person by whose means his son had been perverted. To Mr. Wesley it was a mortification as well as a grief; for he had exposed the errors of the Romanists in some controversial writings, perspicuously and forcibly. One of those writings gave the Catholics an advantage, because it defended the Protestant Association of 1780; and the events which speedily followed, were turned against him. But, upon the great points in dispute, he was clear and cogent; and the temper of this, as of his other controversial tracts, was such, that, some years afterwards, when a common friend invited him to meet his antagonist, Father O'Leary, it was gratifying to both parties to meet upon terms of courtesy and mutual good will.

Before Mr. Wesley submitted to the operation, he considered himself as almost a disabled soldier; so little could he reconcile himself to the restriction from horse-exercise. So perfectly, however, was he re-established in health, that, a few months afterwards, upon entering his seventy-second year, he asked, "How is this, that I find just the same

strength as I did thirty years ago; that my sight is considerably better now, and my nerves* firmer than they were then; that I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand *cause* is the good pleasure of God, who doth whatsoever pleaseth him. The chief *means* are, my constantly rising at four for about fifty years; my generally preaching at five in the morning — one of the most healthy exercises in the world; my never travelling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year." Repeating the same question after another year had elapsed, he added to this list of natural means, "the ability, if ever I want, to sleep immediately; the never losing a night's sleep in my life; two violent fevers, and two deep consumptions; these, it is true, were rough medicines; but they were of admirable service, causing my flesh to come again as the flesh of a little child. May I add, lastly, evenness of temper: I *feel* and *grieve;* but by the grace of God, I *fret* at nothing. But still, *the help that is done upon earth,* He *doth it himself;* and this he doth in answer to many prayers."

He himself had prayed that he might not live to be useless; and the extraordinary vigour which he preserved to extreme old age, might well make

* Mr. Wesley believed that the use of tea made his hand shake so, before he was twenty years old, that he could hardly write. He published an essay against tea-drinking, and left it off during twelve years, then, "at the close of a consumption," by Dr. Fothergill's directions, he used it again, and probably learnt how much he had been mistaken in attributing ill effects to so refreshing and innocent a beverage.

him believe, that, in this instance, his heart's desire had been granted. The seventy-eighth year of his age found him, he says, "by the blessing of God," just * the same as when he entered the twenty-eighth; and, upon entering his eightieth, he blessed God that his time was not labour and sorrow, and that he found no more infirmities than when he was in the flower of manhood. But though this uncommon exemption from the burthen of age was vouchsafed him, it was not in the nature of things that he should be spared from its feelings and regrets. The days of his childhood returned upon him when he visited Epworth; and taking a solitary walk in the churchyard of that place, he says, "I felt the truth of '*one generation goeth, and another cometh.*' See how the earth drops its inhabitants, as the tree drops its leaves!" Wherever he went, his old disciples had past away, and other generations had succeeded in their stead; and, at the houses to which he looked on with pleasure in the course of his yearly rounds, he found more and more frequently, in every succeeding year, that death had been before him. Whole families dropt off one by one, while he continued still in his green old age, full of life, and activity, and strength, and hope, and ardour. Such griefs were felt by him less keenly than by other men; because every day brought with it to him change of scene and of persons; and because, busy as he was on earth, his de-

* "In the year 1769," he says, "I weighed a hundred and twenty two pounds. In 1783, I weighed not a pound more or less."

sires were in heaven. "I had hopes," says he, in his Journal, "of seeing a friend at Lewisham in my way: and so I did; but it was in her coffin. It is well, since she finished her course with joy. In due time I shall see her in glory." To one of his young female correspondents he says, with melancholy anticipation, "I sometimes fear lest you also, as those I tenderly love generally have been, should be snatched away. But let us live to-day!" Many of his most ardent and most amiable disciples seem to have been cut off, in the flower of their youth, by consumption—a disease too frequently connected with what is beautiful in form, and intellect, and disposition.

Mr. Fletcher, though a much younger man, was summoned to his reward before him. That excellent person * left England, under all the symptoms

* In the year 1788, Mr. Wesley printed a letter written to him from France in 1770, by Mr. Fletcher, in which the following remarkable passage occurs: "A set of Free-thinkers (great admirers of Voltaire and Rousseau, Bayle, and Mirabeau) seem bent upon destroying Christianity and government. With one hand, says a lawyer, who has written against them, they shake the throne, and, with the other, they throw down the altar. If we believe them, the world is the dupe of kings and priests; religion is fanaticism and superstition; subordination is slavery and tyranny; Christian morality is absurd, unnatural, and impracticable; and Christianity is the most bloody religion that ever was. And here it is certain, that, by the example of Christians, so called, and by our continual disputes, they have a great advantage. Popery will certainly fall in France in this or the next century; and God will use those vain men to bring about a reformation here, as he used Henry VIII. to do that great work in England: so the madness of his enemies shall turn at last to his praise, and to the furtherance of his kingdom. If you ask what system these men adopt, I answer, that some build, upon deism, a morality founded upon self-preservation, self-interest, and self-honour. Others laugh at all morality, except that which violently disturbs society; and external order is the

of advanced consumption, to try the effect of his native air; and, in the expectation of death, addressed a pastoral letter at that time to his parishioners. "I sometimes," said he, "feel a desire of being buried where you are buried, and having my bones lie in a common earthen bed with yours. But I soon resign that wish; and, leaving that particular to Providence, exult in thinking, that neither life nor death shall ever be able (while we hang on the Crucified, as He hung on the cross) to separate us from Christ our head, nor from the love of each other his members." His recovery, which appears almost miraculous, was ascribed by himself more to eating plentifully of cherries and grapes, than to any other remedies. His friends wished him to remain among them at Nyon: "they urge my being born here," said he, "and I reply, that I was born again in England, and therefore that is, of course, the country which to me is the dearer of the two." He returned to his parish, and married Miss Bosanquet; a woman perfectly suited to him in age, temper, piety, and talents. "We are two poor invalids," said he, "who, between us, make half a labourer. She sweetly helps me to drink the dregs of life, and to carry with ease the daily cross." His account of himself, after this time, is so beautiful, that its insertion might be

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decent cover of fatalism; while materialism is their system." He invites all Christians "to do what the herds do on the Swiss mountains, when the wolves make an attack upon them: instead of goring one another, they unite, form a close battalion, and face the enemy on all sides."

pardoned here, even if Mr. Fletcher were a less important personage in the history of Methodism. "I keep in my sentry-box," says he, "till Providence remove me: my situation is quite suited to my little strength. I may do as much or as little as I please, according to my weakness; and I have an advantage, which I can have no where else in such a degree: my little field of action is just at my door, so that, if I happen to overdo myself, I have but a step from my pulpit to my bed, and from my bed to my grave. If I had a body full of vigour, and a purse full of money, I should like well enough to travel about as Mr. Wesley does; but, as Providence does not call me to it, I readily submit. The snail does best in its shell."

This good man died in 1785, and in the 56th year of his age. Volumes have been filled, and are perpetually being filled, by sectarians of every description, with accounts of the behaviour and triumphant hopes of the dying, all resembling each other; but the circumstances of Mr. Fletcher's death were as peculiar as those of his life. He had taken cold, and a considerable degree of fever had been induced; but no persuasion could prevail upon him to stay from church on the Sunday, nor even to permit that any part of the service should be performed for him. It was the will of the Lord, he said, that he should go; and he assured his wife and his friends that God would strengthen him to go through the duties of the day. Before he had proceeded far in the service, he grew pale, and faltered in his speech, and could scarcely keep

himself from fainting. The congregation were greatly affected and alarmed; and Mrs. Fletcher, pressing through the crowd, earnestly entreated him not to persevere in what was so evidently beyond his strength. He recovered, however, when the windows were opened, exerted himself against the mortal illness which he felt, went through the service, and preached with remarkable earnestness, and with not less effect, for his parishioners plainly saw that the hand of death was upon him. After the sermon, he walked to the communion-table, saying, "I am going to throw myself under the wings of the Cherubim, before the Mercy-seat!" —"Here" (it is his widow who describes this last extraordinary effort of enthusiastic devotion) "the same distressing scene was renewed, with additional solemnity. The people were deeply affected while they beheld him offering up the last languid remains of a life that had been lavishly spent in their service. Groans and tears were on every side. In going through this last part of his duty, he was exhausted again and again; but his spiritual vigour triumphed over his bodily weakness. After several times sinking on the sacramental table, he still resumed his sacred work, and cheerfully distributed, with his dying hand, the love-memorials of his dying Lord. In the course of this concluding office, which he performed by means of the most astonishing exertions, he gave out several verses of hymns, and delivered many affectionate exhortations to his people, calling upon them, at intervals, to celebrate the mercy of God

in short songs of adoration and praise. And now, having struggled through a service of near four hours' continuance, he was supported, with blessings in his mouth, from the altar to his chamber, where he lay for some time in a swoon, and from whence he never walked into the world again." Mr. Fletcher's nearest and dearest friends sympathized entirely with him in his devotional feelings, and therefore they seem never to have entertained a thought that this tragedy may have exasperated his disease, and proved the direct occasion of his death. "I besought the Lord," says Mrs. Fletcher, "if it were his good pleasure, to spare him to me a little longer. But my prayer seemed to have no wings; and I could not help mingling continually therewith, Lord give me perfect resignation!"

On the Sunday following he died, and that day also was distinguished by circumstances not less remarkable. A supplicatory hymn for his recovery was sung in the church; and one who was present says, it is impossible to convey an idea of the burst of sorrow that accompanied it. "The whole village," says his friend Mr. Gilpin, "wore an air of consternation and sadness. Hasty messengers were passing to and fro, with anxious enquiries and confused reports; and the members of every family sate together in silence that day, awaiting with trembling expectation the issue of every hour." After the evening service, several of the poor, who came from a distance, and who were usually entertained under his roof, lingered

about the house, and expressed an earnest wish that they might see their expiring pastor. Their desire was granted. The door of his chamber was set open; directly opposite to which, he was sitting upright in his bed, with the curtains undrawn, "unaltered in his usual venerable appearance;" and they passed along the gallery one by one, pausing as they passed by the door, to look upon him for the last time. A few hours after this extraordinary scene he breathed his last, without a struggle or a groan, in perfect peace, and in the fullness of faith and of hope. Such was the death of Jean Guillaume de la Flechere, or as he may more properly be designated, in this his adopted country, Fletcher of Madeley, a man of whom Methodism may well be proud as the most able of its defenders; and whom the Church of England may hold in honourable remembrance, as one of the most pious and excellent of her sons. "I was intimately acquainted with him," says Mr. Wesley, "for above thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles: and in all that time I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years; but one equal to him I have not known: one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God, so unblameable a character in every respect, I have not found, either in Europe or America. Nor do I expect to find another such on this side of eternity."

Wesley thought, that if Mr. Fletcher's friends had not dissuaded him from continuing that course of itinerancy which he began in his company, it would have made him a strong man. And that, after his health was restored by his native air, and confirmed by his wife's constant care, if "he had used this health in travelling all over the kingdom five or six, or seven months every year, (for which never was man more eminently qualified, no, not Mr. Whitefield himself) he would have done more good than any other man in England. I cannot doubt," he adds, "but this would have been the more excellent way." It had been Mr. Wesley's hope, at one time, that after his death, Mr. Fletcher would succeed to the supremacy of the spiritual dominion which he had established. Mr. Fletcher was qualified for the succession by his thorough disregard of worldly advantages, his perfect piety, his devotedness to the people among whom he ministered, his affable manner, and his popular and persuasive oratory,—qualifications in which he was not inferior to Wesley himself. But he had neither the ambition, nor the flexibility of Mr. Wesley; he would not have known how to rule, nor how to yield as he did: holiness with him was all in all. Wesley had the temper and talents of a statesman: in the Romish Church he would have been the general, if not the founder, of an order; or might have held a distinguished place in history, as a cardinal or a pope. Fletcher, in any communion, would have been a saint.

Mr. Wesley still continued to be the same mar-

vellous old man. No one who saw him, even casually, in his old age, can have forgotten his venerable appearance. His face was remarkably fine; his complexion fresh to the last week of his life; his eye quick, and keen, and active. When you met him in the street of a crowded city, he attracted notice, not only by his band and cassock, and his long hair, white and bright as silver, but by his pace and manner, both indicating that all his minutes were numbered, and that not one was to be lost. "Though I am always in haste," he says of himself, "I am never in a hurry; because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit. It is true, I travel four or five thousand miles in a year; but I generally travel alone in my carriage, and, consequently, am as retired ten hours a-day as if I were in a wilderness. On other days, I never spend less than three hours (frequently ten or twelve) in the day, alone. So there are few persons who spend so many hours secluded from all company." Thus it was that he found time to read much, and write voluminously. After his eightieth year, he went twice to Holland, a country in which Methodism, as Quakerism had done before it, met with a certain degree of success. Upon completing his eighty-second year, he says, "is any thing too hard for God? It is now eleven years since I have felt any such thing as weariness. Many times I speak till my voice fails, and I can speak no longer. Frequently I walk till my strength fails, and I can walk no farther; yet, even then, I feel no sensation

of weariness, but am perfectly easy from head to foot. I dare not impute this to natural causes. It is the will of God." A year afterwards he says, "I am a wonder to myself! I am never tired (such is the goodness of God), either with writing, preaching, or travelling. One natural cause, undoubtedly, is, my continual exercise, and change of air. How the latter contributes to health I know not; but certainly it does." In his eighty-fourth year, he first began to feel decay; and, upon commencing his eighty-fifth, he observes, "I am not so agile as I was in times past; I do not run or walk so fast as I did. My sight is a little decayed. My left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves me to read. I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple (occasioned by a blow received some months since), and in my right shoulder and arm, which I impute partly to a sprain, and partly to the rheumatism. I find, likewise, some decay in my memory with regard to names and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard twenty, forty, or sixty years ago. Neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite, (though I want but a third part of the food I did once,) nor do I feel any such thing as weariness, either in travelling or preaching. And I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which I do as readily, and, I believe, as correctly as ever." He acknowledged, therefore, that he had cause to praise God for bodily, as well as spiritual blessings; and that he had suffered little, as yet, by "the rush of numerous years."

Other persons perceived his growing weakness, before he was thus aware of it himself; the most marked symptom was that of a frequent disposition to sleep during the day. He had always been able to lie down and sleep almost at will, like a mere animal, or a man in little better than an animal state, — a consequence, probably, of the incessant activity of his life: this he himself rightly accounted one of the causes of his excellent health, and it was, doubtless, a consequence of it also: but the involuntary slumbers which came upon him in the latter years of his life, were indications that the machine was wearing out, and would soon come to a stop. In 1788, he lost his brother Charles, who, during many years, had been his zealous coadjutor, and, through life, his faithful and affectionate friend. Latterly their opinions had differed. Charles saw the evil tendency of some part of the discipline, and did not hesitate to say that he abominated the band-meetings, which he had formerly approved; and, adhering faithfully himself to the church, he regretted the separation which he foresaw, and disapproved of John's conduct, in taking steps which manifestly tended to facilitate it. Indeed, Mr. Wesley laid aside, at last, all those pretensions by which he had formerly excused himself; and, in the year 1787, with the assistance of two of his clerical coadjutors, Mr. Creighton and Mr. Peard Dickinson, he ordained two of his preachers, and consecrated Mather a bishop or superintendent. But this decided difference of opinion produced no diminution

of love between the two brothers. They had agreed to differ; and, to the last, John was not more jealous of his own authority, than Charles was solicitous that he should preserve it. "Keep it while you live," he said, "and after your death, *detur digniori*, or rather, *dignioribus*. You cannot settle the succession: you cannot divine how God will settle it." Charles, though he attained to his eightieth year, was a valetudinarian through the greatest part of his life, in consequence, it is believed, of having injured his constitution by close application and excessive abstinence at Oxford. He had always dreaded the act of dying; and his prayer was, that God would grant him patience and an easy death. A calmer frame of mind, and an easier passage, could not have been granted him; the powers of life were fairly worn out, and, without any disease, he fell asleep. By his own desire he was buried, not in his brother's burying-ground, because it was not consecrated, but in the churchyard of Mary-le-bone, the parish in which he resided; and his pall was supported by eight clergymen of the Church of England.

It was reported that Charles had said, his brother would not outlive him more than a year. The prediction might have been hazarded with sufficient likelihood of its fulfilment; for John was then drawing near the grave. Upon his eighty-sixth birthday, he says, "I now find I grow old. My sight is decayed, so that I cannot read a small print, unless in a strong light. My strength is decayed; so that I walk much slower than I did

some years since. My memory of names, whether of persons or places, is decayed, till I stop a little to recollect them. What I should be afraid of is, if I took thought for the morrow, that my body should weigh down my mind, and create either stubbornness, by the decrease of my understanding, or peevishness, by the increase of bodily infirmities. But thou shalt answer for me, O Lord, my God!" His strength now diminished so much, that he found it difficult to preach more than twice a-day; and for many weeks he abstained from his five o'clock morning sermons, because a slow and settled fever parched his mouth. Finding himself a little better, he resumed the practice, and hoped to hold on a little longer; but, at the beginning of the year 1790, he writes, "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God! I do not slack my labours: I can preach and write still." In the middle of the same year, he closed his cash account-book with the following words, written with a tremulous hand, so as to be scarcely legible: "For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly: I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction, that I save all I can, and give all I can; that is, all I have." His strength was now quite gone, and no glasses would help his sight. "But I feel no pain," he says, "from head to foot; only, it seems,

nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more, till

"The weary springs of life stand still at last."

On the 1st of February, 1791, he wrote his last letter to America. It shows how anxious he was that his followers should consider themselves as one united body. "See," said he, "that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men, that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue." He expressed, also, a sense that his hour was almost come. "Those that desire to write," said he, "or say any thing to me, have no time to lose; for *time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind:*" — words which his father had used in one of the last letters that he addressed to his sons at Oxford. On the 17th of that month, he took cold after preaching at Lambeth. For some days he struggled against an increasing fever, and continued to preach till the Wednesday following, when he delivered his last sermon. From that time he became daily weaker and more lethargic, and on the 2d of March, he died in peace; being in the eighty-eighth year of his age, and the sixty-fifth of his ministry.

During his illness he said, "Let me be buried in nothing but what is woollen; and let my corpse be carried in my coffin into the chapel." Some years before, he had prepared a vault for himself,

and for those itinerant preachers who might die in London. In his will he directed that six poor men should have twenty shillings each for carrying his body to the grave; "for I particularly desire," said he, "there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's bosom. I solemnly adjure my executors, in the name of God, punctually to observe this." At the desire of many of his friends, his body was carried into the chapel the day preceding the interment, and there lay in a kind of state becoming the person, dressed in his clerical habit, with gown, cassock, and band; the old clerical cap on his head, a Bible in one hand, and a white handkerchief in the other. The face was placid, and the expression which death had fixed upon his venerable features, was that of a serene and heavenly smile. The crowds who flocked to see him were so great, that it was thought prudent, for fear of accidents, to accelerate the funeral, and perform it between five and six in the morning. The intelligence, however, could not be kept entirely secret, and several hundred persons attended at that unusual hour. Mr. Richardson, who performed the service, had been one of his preachers almost thirty years. When he came to that part of the service, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself the soul of our dear *brother*," his voice changed, and he substituted the word *father*; and the feeling with which he did this was such, that the congre-

gation who were shedding silent tears, burst at once into loud weeping.

Mr. Wesley left no other property behind him than the copyright and current editions of his works, and this he bequeathed to the use of the Connection after his debts should have been paid. There was a debt of one thousand six hundred pounds to the family of his brother Charles; and he had drawn also for some years upon the fund for superannuated preachers, to support those who were in full employment. When he was told that some persons murmured at this, he used to answer "what can I do? must the work stand still? the men and their families cannot starve. I have no money. Here it is; we must use it; it is for the Lord's work." The money thus appropriated and the interest due upon it, amounted to a considerable sum. In building chapels, also, the expenses of the Connection outran its means, so that its finances were left in an embarrassed state. The number of his preachers at the time of his death amounted in the British dominions to 313, in the United States to 198, the number of members in the British dominions was 76,968, in the United States, 57,621.

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Such was the life, and such the labours of John Wesley; a man of great views, great energy, and great virtues. That he awakened a zealous spirit, not only in his own community, but in a Church which needed something to quicken it, is acknow-

ledged by the members of that Church itself; that he encouraged enthusiasm and extravagance, lent a ready ear to false and impossible relations, and spread superstition as well as piety, would hardly be denied by the candid and judicious among his own people. In its immediate effects the powerful principle of religion, which he and his preachers diffused, has reclaimed many from a course of sin, has supported many in poverty, sickness, and affliction, and has imparted to many a triumphant joy in death. What Wesley says of the miracles wrought at the tomb of the Abbé Paris, may fitly be applied here; "In many of these instances, I see great superstition, as well as strong faith: but God makes allowance for invincible ignorance, and blesses the faith, notwithstanding the superstition." Concerning the general and remoter consequences of Methodism, opinions will differ. They who consider the wide-spreading schism to which it has led, and who know that the welfare of the country is vitally connected with its church-establishment, may think that the evil overbalances the good. But the good may endure, and the evil be only for a time. In every other sect there is an inherent spirit of hostility to the Church of England, too often and too naturally connected with diseased political opinions. So it was in the beginning, and so it will continue to be, as long as those sects endure. But Methodism is free from this. The extravagancies which accompanied its growth are no longer encouraged, and will altogether be discountenanced, as their real nature is

understood. This cannot be doubted. It is in the natural course of things that it should purify itself gradually from whatever is objectionable in its institutions. Nor is it beyond the bounds of reasonable hope, that conforming itself to the original intention of its founders, it may again draw towards the establishment from which it has seceded, and deserve to be recognized as an auxiliary institution, its ministers being analogous to the regulars, and its members to the tertiaries and various confraternities of the Romish Church. The obstacles to this are surely not insuperable, perhaps not so difficult as they may appear. And were this effected, John Wesley would then be ranked, not only among the most remarkable and influential men of his age, but among the great benefactors of his country and his kind.

NOTES

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS.

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NOTE I. Page 27.

Charles Wesley accused of praying for the Pretender.

I HAVE read somewhere a more comical blunder upon this subject: a preacher reading in Jeremiah, x. 22., "Behold the noise of the *bruit* is come, and a great commotion from the *North* country," took it for granted that the rebellion in Scotland was meant, and that the *brute* was the Pretender.

NOTE II. Page 73.

Lay Preachers.

THE question whether, in the ancient Church, laymen were ever allowed by authority to make sermons to the people, is investigated by Bingham with his usual erudition. "That they did it in a private way, as catechists, in their catechetick schools, at Alexandria and other places, there is no question. For Origen read lectures in the catechetick school of Alexandria, before he was in orders, by the appointment of Demetrius; and St. Jerome says, there was a long succession of famous men in that school, who were called ecclesiastical doctors upon that account. But this was a different thing from their public preaching in the church. Yet in some cases a special commission was given to a layman to preach, and then he might do it by the authority of the bishop's commission for that time. Thus Eusebius says, Origen was approved by Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, and Theotistus of Cæsarea, to preach and expound the Scriptures publicly in the church, when

he was only a layman. And when Demetrius of Alexandria made a remonstrance against this, as an innovation that had never been seen or heard of before, that a layman should preach to the people in the presence of bishops, Alexander replied in a letter, and told him he was much mistaken; for it was an usual thing in many places, where men were well qualified to edify the brethren, for bishops to intreat them to preach to the people."—*Antiquities of the Christian Church*, book xiv. ch. 4. § 4.

NOTE III. Page 109.

Thomas Olivers.

"For four or five years," says this person, "I was greatly entangled with a farmer's daughter, whose sister was married to Sir I. P. of N—wt—n, in that country. What

"Strange reverse of human fates!"

for one sister was wooed by, and married to a baronet, who was esteemed one of the finest men in the country. When she died, Sir I. was almost distracted. Presently after her funeral, he published an elegy on her of a thousand verses! For some time he daily visited her in her vault, and at last took her up, and kept her in his bed-chamber for several years.

"On the other hand, her sister, who was but little inferior in person, fell into the hands of a most insignificant young man, who was a means of driving her almost to an untimely end."

The Baronet whom Olivers alludes to was probably Sir John Price of Buckland. A certain Bridget Bostock was famous in the county of Cheshire, in his time, for performing wonderful cures, and he applied to her to raise his wife from the dead. His letters upon this extraordinary subject may be found in the Monthly Magazine, vol. xxvi. pp. 30, 31. The person by whom they were communicated to that

journal says, that they exposed the writer to the severest ridicule; but in any good mind they would rather excite compassion. Sir John fully believed that this woman could work miracles, and reasoning upon that belief he applied to her in full faith.

NOTE IV. Page 124.

What Haime saw was certainly a bustard.

"THE following very curious and authentic account of two bustards, was published in the Gentleman's Magazine for the year 1805, by Mr. Tucker, school-master at Tilshead. 'A man, about four o'clock in the morning, on some day in June, 1801, was coming from Tinhead to Tilshead, when near a place called Askings Penning, one mile from Tilshead, he saw over his head a large bird, which afterwards proved to be a bustard. He had not proceeded far, before it lighted on the ground, immediately before his horse, which it indicated an inclination to attack, and in fact very soon began the onset. The man alighted, and getting hold of the bird, endeavoured to secure it; and after struggling with it nearly an hour succeeded, and brought it alive to the house of Mr. Bartlett, at Tilshead, where it continued till the month of August, when it was sold to Lord Temple for the sum of thirty-one guineas.

"'About a fortnight subsequent to the taking this bustard, Mr. Grant, a farmer residing at Tilshead, returning from Warminster market, was attacked in a similar manner near Tilshead Lodge, by another bird of the same species. His horse being spirited, took fright and ran off, which obliged Mr. Grant to relinquish his design of endeavouring to take the bird. The circumstance of two birds (whose nature has been always considered, like that of a turkey, domestic) attacking a man and horse, is so very singular, that it deserves recording; and particularly as it is probably the last record we shall find of the existence of this bird upon our downs."—*Sir Richard Hoare's Ancient Wiltshire*, p. 94. Note.

The birds certainly had their nest near; and there is nothing more wonderful in the fact, than what every sportsman has seen in the partridge, when the mother attempts to draw him away from her young. But it was with the greatest pleasure that I recollected this anecdote in reading the Life of John Haime, not merely as explaining the incident in the text, but as proving his veracity; for undoubtedly, without this explanation, many readers would have supposed the story to be a mere falsehood, which would have discredited the writer's testimony in every other part of his narration.

NOTE V. Page 170.

The renewal of the image of God in the heart of man.

Mr. Toplady has a curious paper upon this subject.

"When a portrait painter takes a likeness, there must be an original from whom to take it. Here the original are God, and Christ. '' When I awake up after thy likeness,' &c.; and, we are 'predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son.'

"The painter chooses the materials on which he will delineate his piece. There are paintings on wood, on glass, on metals, on ivory, on canvass. So God chooses and selects the persons, on whom his uncreated spirit shall, with the pencil of effectual grace, re-delineate that holy likeness which Adam lost. Among these are some, whose natural capacities, and acquired improvements, are not of the first rate: there the image of God is painted on wood. Others of God's people have not those quick sensibilities, and poignant feelings, by which many are distinguished: there the Holy Spirit's painting is on marble. Others are permitted to fall from the ardour of their first love, and to deviate from their stedfastness: there the Holy Spirit paints on glass, which, perhaps, the first stone of temptation may injure. But the Celestial Artist will, in time, repair those breaches, and restore the frail, brittle Christian, to his original enjoyments, and to more than his original purity; and, what may seem truly wonderful, Divine Grace restores

the picture by breaking it over again. It is the broken-hearted sinner to whom God will impart the comforts of salvation.

"The ancients painted only in water-colours; but the moderns (from about A. D. 1320) have added beauty and durability to their pictures, by painting them in oil. Applicable to hypocrites and true believers. An hypocrite may outwardly bear something that resembles the image of God; but it is only in fresco, or water-colours, which do not last; and are, at best, laid on by the hand of dissimulation. But (if I may accommodate so familiar an idea to so high a subject) the Holy Spirit paints in oil; he accompanies his work with unction and with power; and hence it shall be crowned with honours, and praise, and glory, at Christ's appearing."—

The remainder of the paper is left apposite.

NOTE VI. Page 171.

The New Birth.

"THE ground and reason of the expression," says Wesley, "are easy to be understood. When we undergo this great change, we may, with much propriety, be said to be born again, because there is so near a resemblance between the circumstances of the natural and of the spiritual birth; so that to consider the circumstances of the natural birth, is the most easy way to understand the spiritual.

"The child which is not yet born subsists indeed by the air, as does every thing which has life, but feels it not, nor any thing else unless in a very dull and imperfect manner. It hears little, if at all, the organs of hearing being as yet closed up. It sees nothing, having its eyes fast shut, and being surrounded with utter darkness. There are, it may be, some faint beginnings of life, when the time of its birth draws nigh; and some motion consequent thereon, whereby it is distinguished from a mere mass of matter. But it has no *senses*; all these avenues of the soul are hitherto quite

shut up. Of consequence, it has scarcely any intercourse with this visible world; nor any knowledge, or conception, or idea, of the things that occur therein.

"The reason why he that is not yet born is wholly a stranger to the visible world, is, not because it is afar off; it is very nigh; it surrounds him on every side: but partly because he has not those senses, they are not yet opened in his soul, whereby alone it is possible to hold commerce with the material world; and partly because so thick a veil is cast between, through which he can discern nothing.

"But no sooner is the child born into the world than he exists in a quite different manner. He now feels the air, with which he is surrounded, and which pours into him from every side, as fast as he alternately breathes it back to sustain the flame of life, and hence springs a continual increase of strength, of motion, and of sensation: all the bodily senses being now awakened, and furnished with their proper objects.

"His eyes are now opened to perceive the light, which silently flowing in upon them, discovers not only itself, but an infinite variety of things with which before he was wholly unacquainted. His ears are unclosed, and sounds rush in with endless diversity. Every sense is employed upon such objects as are peculiarly suitable to it, and by these inlets, the soul, having an open intercourse with the visible world, acquires more and more knowledge of sensible things, of all the things which are under the sun.

"So it is with him that is born of God. Before that great change is wrought, although he subsists by him in whom all that have life live, and move, and have their being, yet he is not *sensible* of God; he does not *feel*, he has no inward consciousness of his presence. He does not perceive that divine breath of life, without which he cannot subsist a moment. Nor is he sensible of any of the things of God. They make no impression upon his soul. God is continually calling to him from on high, but he heareth not; his ears are shut, so that the 'voice of the charmer,' is lost on him, 'charm he ever so wisely.' He

seeth not the things of the Spirit of God, the eyes of his understanding being closed, and utter darkness covering his whole soul, surrounding him on every side. It is true, he may have some faint dawnings of life, some small beginnings of the spiritual motion; but as yet he has no spiritual senses capable of discerning spiritual objects; consequently he discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God. He cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

"Hence he has scarce any knowledge of the invisible world, as he has scarce any intercourse with it. Not that it is afar off. No: he is in the midst of it: it encompasses him round about. The *other world*, as we usually term it, is not far from any of us. It is above, and beneath, and on every side: only the natural man discerneth it not; partly because he hath no spiritual senses, whereby alone we can discern the things of God; partly because so thick a veil is interposed, as he knows not how to penetrate.

"But when he is born of God, born of the Spirit, how is the manner of existence changed! His whole soul is now sensible of God, and he can say, by sure experience, 'Thou art about my bed, and about my path;' I feel thee 'in all my ways.' Thou besettest me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me. The spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul. And the same breath, which comes from, returns to God: as it is continually received by faith, so it is continually rendered back by love, by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving; love, and praise, and prayer, being the breath of every soul which is truly born of God. And by this new kind of spiritual respiration, spiritual life is not only sustained, but increased day by day, together with spiritual strength, and motion, and sensation. All the senses of the soul being now awake, and capable of discerning spiritual good and evil.

"The eyes of his understanding are now open, and he seeth Him that is invisible. He sees what is the exceeding greatness of his power, and of his love towards them that believe. He sees that God is merciful to him, a sinner,

that he is reconciled through the Son of his love. He clearly perceives both the pardoning love of God and all his exceeding great and precious promises. God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined, and doth shine in his heart, to enlighten him with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. All the darkness is now passed away, and he abides in the light of God's countenance.

"His ears are now opened, and the voice of God no longer calls in vain. He hears and obeys the heavenly calling: he 'knows the voice of his Shepherd.' All his spiritual senses being now awakened, he has a clear intercourse with the invisible world. And hence he knows more and more of the things which before 'it could not enter into his heart to conceive.' He now knows what the peace of God is: what is joy in the Holy Ghost, what the love of God which is shed abroad in the hearts of them that believe in him through Christ Jesus. Thus the veil being removed, which before intercepted the light and voice, the knowledge and love of God, he who is born of the Spirit, dwelling in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." — *Wesley's Works*, vol. vii. p. 268.

NOTE VII. Page 172.

He entangled himself in Contradictions.

"THE expression being *born again*, was not first used by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus. It was in common use among the Jews when our Saviour appeared among them. When an adult heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized, he was said to be born again; by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil, was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children. — vol. vii. p. 296

Yet, in the same sermon, Wesley affirms, "that Baptism is not the New Birth, that they are not one and the same thing. Many indeed seem to imagine that they are just the same; at least they speak as if they thought so; but I do not know that this opinion is publicly avowed, by any denomination of Christians whatever. Certainly, it is not by any within these kingdoms, whether of the Established Church or dissenting from it. The judgment of the latter is clearly declared in their large catechism: "Q. What are the parts of a Sacrament? A. The parts of a Sacrament are two; the one an outward and sensible sign, the other an inward and spiritual grace signified. Q. What is Baptism? A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water to be a sign and seal of regeneration by his Spirit." Here it is manifest, baptism, the sign, is spoken of as distinct from regeneration, the thing signified."

Where was Wesley's logic? or where his fairness? Can any thing be more evident, than that this catechism describes regeneration as the inward and spiritual grace, and the act of baptism (sprinkling or immersion) as the outward and visible sign. What follows is as bad.

"In the Church Catechism likewise, the judgment of our Church is declared with the utmost clearness. 'Q. What meanest though by this word Sacrament? A. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Q. What is the outward part or form in baptism? A. Water, wherein the person is baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Q. What is the inward parts, or thing signified? A. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' Nothing therefore is plainer, than that, according to the church of England, baptism is not the New Birth."

I do not believe that an instance of equal blindness or disingenuity (whichever it may be thought) can be found in all the other parts of Wesley's works. So plain is it that the words of the catechism mean precisely what Wesley affirms they do not mean, that, in the very next page, he contradicts himself in the clearest manner, and says, "it is

certain, our church supposes, that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again. And it is allowed, that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants." Vol. vii. p. 302.

NOTE VIII. Page 174.

Instantaneous Conversion.

"An observation," says Toplady, "which I met with in reading Downmane's Christian Warfare, struck me much: speaking of the Holy Spirit as the sealer of the Elect, he asks, how is it possible to receive the seal without feeling the impression."

"Lord," says Fuller in one of his Scripture Observations, "I read of my Saviour, that when he was in the wilderness, *then the devil leaveth him, and behold angels came and ministered unto him.* A great change in a little time. No twilight betwixt night and day. No purgatory condition betwixt hell and heaven, but instantly, when out devil, in angel. Such is the case of every solitary soul. It will make company for itself. A musing mind will not stand neuter a minute, but presently side with legions of good or bad thoughts. Grant, therefore, that my soul, which ever will have some, may never have bad company."

NOTE IX. Page 175.

Salvation not to be sought by Works.

This doctrine is stated with perilous indiscretion in one of the Moravian hymns.

When any, thro' a beam of light,
Can see and own they are not right,
But enter on a legal strife,
Amend their former course of life,
And work and toil, and sweat from day to day.
Such, to their Saviour quite mistake the way.

NOTE X. Page 177.

Faith.

In methodistical and mystical biography, the reader will sometimes be reminded of these lines in Ovid.

In prece totus eram, cœlestia numina sensi,
Lætaque purpureâ luce refulsit humus.
Non equidem vidi (valeant mendacia vatum!)
Te Dea; nec fueras adspicienda viro.
Sed quæ nescieram, quorumque errore tenebar,
Cognita sunt nullo præcipiente mihi.

Ovid, Fast. vi. 251—254.

NOTE XI. Page 181.

Assurance.

There is a good story of assurance in Belknap's History of New Hampshire. "A certain captain, John Underhill, in the days of Puritanism, affirmed, that having long lain under a spirit of bondage, he could get no assurance; till at length, as he was taking a pipe of tobacco, the Spirit set home upon him an absolute promise of free grace, with such assurance and joy, that he had never since doubted of his good estate, neither should he, whatever sins he might fall into. And he endeavoured to prove, 'that as the Lord was pleased to convert Saul while he was persecuting, so he might manifest himself to him while making a moderate use of the good creature tobacco!' This was one of the things for which he was questioned and censured by the elders at Boston." Vol. i. p. 42.

"Another," says South, "flatters himself, that he has lived in full assurance of his salvation for ten or twenty, or, perhaps, thirty years; that is, in other words, the man has been ignorant and confident very long."

NOTE XII. Page 182.

Perfection.

THE Gospel Magazine contains a likely anecdote concerning this curious doctrine. "A lady of my acquaintance," says the writer, "had, in the early stage of her religious profession, very closely attached herself to a society of avowed Arminians, she had imbibed all their notions, and, among the rest, that of sinless perfection. What she had been taught to believe attainable, she at last concluded she had, herself, attained as perfectly as any of the perfect class in Mr. Wesley's societies; and she accordingly went so far as to profess she had obtained what they call the "second blessing," that is, an eradication of all sin and a heart filled with nothing but pure and perfect love. A circumstance, however, not long after occurred, which gave a complete shock to her self-righteous presumption, as well as to the principles from whence it sprung. Her husband having one day contradicted her opinion and controuled her will, in a matter where he thought himself authorised to do both one and the other, the perfect lady felt herself so extremely angry, that, as she declared to me, she could have boxed his ears, and had great difficulty to refrain from some act declarative of the emotions of rising passion and resentment. Alarmed at what she felt, and not knowing how to account for such unhallowed sensations in a heart, in which, as she thought, all sin had been done away, she ran for explanation to the leader of the perfect band. To her she related ingenuously all that passed in the interview with her husband. The band-leader, instructed in the usual art of administering consolation, though at the expense of truth and rectitude, replied, 'What you felt on that occasion, my dear, was nothing but a little animal nature!' My friend being a lady of too much sense, and too much honesty to be imposed upon by such a delusory explanation, exclaimed, 'Animal nature! No; it was animal devil!' From that moment she bid adieu to per-

fection, and its concomitant delusions, as well as to those who are led by them."

"Gnat-strainers," says Toplady in one of his sermons, "are too often camel-swallowers; and the Pharisaical mantle of superstitious austerity is, very frequently, a cover for a cloven foot. Beware then, of driving too furiously at first setting out. Take the cool of the day. Begin as you can hold on. I knew a lady, who to prove herself perfect, ripped off her flounces, and would not wear an ear-ring, a necklace, a ring, or an inch of lace. Ruffles were Babylonish. Powder was Anti-christian. A riband was carnal. A snuff-box smelt of the bottomless pit. And yet, under all this parade of outside humility, the fair ascetic was — but I forbear entering into particulars: suffice it to say, that she was a concealed Antinomian. And I have known too many similar instances."

NOTE XIII. Page 186.

Ministry of Angels.

Upon this subject Charles Wesley has thus expressed himself, in a sermon upon Psalm xci. 11. "*He shall give his Angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.*"

"By these perfections, strength and wisdom, they are well able to preserve us either from the approach (if that be more profitable for us) or in the attack of any evil. By their wisdom they discern whatever either obstructs or promotes our real advantage: by their strength they effectually repel the one and secure a free course to the other: by the first, they choose means conducive to these ends; by the second, they put them in execution. One particular method of preserving good men, which we may reasonably suppose these wise beings sometimes choose, and by their strength put in execution, is the altering some material cause that would have a pernicious effect; the purifying (for instance) tainted air, which would otherwise produce a contagious distemper. And this they may easily do, either by in-

creasing the current of it, so as naturally to cleanse its putridity; or, by mixing with it some other substance, so to correct its hurtful qualities, and render it salubrious to human bodies. Another method they may be supposed to adopt when their commission is not so general; when they are authorized to preserve some few persons from a common calamity. It then is probable that they do not alter the cause, but the subject on which it is to work; that they do not lessen the strength of the one, but increase that of the other. Thus, too, where they are not allowed to prevent, they may remove, pain or sickness; thus the angel restored Daniel in a moment, when neither strength or breath remained in him.

"By these means, by changing either our bodies or the material causes that use to affect them, they may easily defend us from all bodily evils, so far as is expedient for us. A third method they may be conceived to employ to defend us from spiritual dangers, by applying themselves immediately to the *soul* to raise or allay our passions; and, indeed, this province seems more natural to them than either of the former. How a spiritual being can act upon matter seems more unaccountable than how it can act on spirit: that one immaterial being, by touching another, should increase or lessen its motion; that an angel should retard or quicken the channel wherein the passions of angelic substance flow, no more excites our astonishment than that one piece of matter should have the same effect on its kindred substance; or that a flood-gate, or other material instrument, should affect the course of a river: rather, considering how contagious the nature of the passions is, the wonder is on the other side; not how they can avoid to affect him at all, but how they can avoid affecting them more; how they can continue so near us, who are so subject to catch them, without spreading the flames which burn in themselves. And a plain instance of their power to allay human passions is afforded us in the case of Daniel, when he beheld that gloriously terrible minister, whose 'face was as the appearance of lightning,

and his eyes as lamps of fire; his arms and feet like polished brass, and his voice as the voice of a multitude,' x. 6.; when the tears and sorrows of the Prophet were turned so strong upon him, that he was in a deep sleep, void of sense and motion. Yet this fear, these turbulent passions, the angel allayed in a moment; when they were hurrying on with the utmost impetuosity, he checked them in their course; so that immediately after we find Daniel desiring the continuance of that converse which before he was utterly unable to sustain.

"The same effect was, doubtless, wrought on all those to whom these superior beings, on their first appearance, used this salutation—'Fear not;' which would have been a mere insult and cruel mockery upon human weakness, had they not, with that advice, given the power to follow it. Nearly allied to this method of influencing the passions, is the last I intend to mention, by which the angels (it is probable) preserve good men, especially in or from spiritual dangers. And this is by applying themselves to their reason, by instilling good thoughts into their hearts; either such as are good in their own nature, as tend to our improvement in virtue, or such as are contrary to the suggestions of flesh and blood, by which we are tempted to vice. It is not unlikely that we are indebted to them, not only for most of those reflections which suddenly dart into our minds, we know not how, having no connection with any thing that went before them; but for many of those also which seem entirely our own, and naturally consequent from the preceding."

NOTE XIV. Page 187.

Agency of evil Spirits.

"LET us consider," says Wesley, "what may be the employment of unholy spirits from death to the resurrection. We cannot doubt but the moment they leave the body, they find themselves surrounded by spirits of their

own kind, probably human as well as diabolical. What power God may permit these to exercise over them, we do not distinctly know. But it is not improbable, he may suffer Satan to employ them, as he does his own angels, in inflicting death, or evils of various kinds, on the men that know not God. For this end they may raise storms by sea or by land; they may shoot meteors through the air; they may occasion earthquakes; and, in numberless ways, afflict those whom they are not suffered to destroy. Where they are not permitted to take away life, they may inflict various diseases: and many of these, which we may judge to be natural, are undoubtedly diabolical. I believe this is frequently the case with lunatics. It is observable that many of these, mentioned in Scripture, who are called lunatics, by one of the Evangelists, are termed demoniacs by another. One of the most eminent physicians I ever knew, particularly in cases of insanity, the late Dr. Deacon, was clearly of opinion, that this was the case with many, if not with most lunatics. And it is no valid objection to this, that these diseases are so often cured by natural means; for a wound inflicted by an evil spirit might be cured as any other; unless that spirit were permitted to repeat the blow.

"May not some of these evil spirits be likewise employed, in conjunction with evil angels, in tempting wicked men to sin, and in procuring occasions for them? Yea, and in tempting good men to sin, even after they have escaped the corruption that is in the world. Herein, doubtless, they put forth all their strength, and greatly glory if they conquer." Vol. xi. p. 31.

"The ingenious Dr. Cheyne," says one of Mr. Wesley's correspondents, "reckons all gloomy wrong-headedness, and spurious free-thinking, so many symptoms of bodily diseases: and, I think, says, the human organs, in some nervous distempers, may, perhaps, be rendered fit for the actuation of demons: and advises religion as an excellent remedy. Nor is this unlikely to be my own case; for a nervous disease of some years' standing, rose to its height

in 1748, and I was attacked in proportion by irreligious opinions. The medicinal part of his advice, a vegetable diet, at last, cured my dreadful distemper. It is natural to think the spiritual part of his advice equally good; and shall I neglect it, because I am now in health? God forbid!—*John Walsh.*" *Arminian Magazine*, vol. ii. p. 433.

NOTE XV. Page 191.

Immortality of Animals.

On this point Wesley's bitterest opponent agreed with him. "I will honestly confess," says Toplady, "that I never yet heard one single argument urged against the immortality of brutes which, if admitted, would not, *mutatis mutandis*, be equally conclusive against the immortality of man."

NOTE XVI. Page 207.

Itinerancy.

There are some things in the system of the Methodists which very much resemble certain arrangements proposed by John Knox and his colleagues in the First Book of Discipline. "It was found necessary, says Dr. M'Crie, to employ some persons in extraordinary and temporary charges. As there was not a sufficient number of ministers to supply the different parts of the country, that the people might not be left altogether destitute of public worship and instruction, certain pious persons who had received a common education, were appointed to read the Scriptures and the Common Prayers. These were called Readers. In large parishes persons of this description were also employed to relieve the ministers from a part of the public service. If they advanced in knowledge, they were encouraged to add a few plain exhortations to the reading of the Scriptures. In that case they were called Exhorters; but they were examined and admitted, before entering upon this employment.

"The same cause gave rise to another temporary expedient. Instead of fixing all the ministers in particular charges it was judged proper, after supplying the principal towns, to assign to the rest the superintendance of a large district, over which they were appointed regularly to travel for the purpose of preaching, of planting churches, and inspecting the conduct of ministers, exhorters, and readers. These were called Superintendants. The number originally proposed was ten; but owing to the scarcity of proper persons, or rather to the want of necessary funds, there were never more than six appointed. The deficiency was supplied by Commissioners or Visitors, appointed from time to time by the General Assembly."

Life of Knox, vol. ii. pp. 6, 7.

"We were not the first itinerant preachers in England," says Wesley; "twelve were appointed by Queen Elizabeth to travel continually, in order to spread true religion through the kingdom. And the office and salary still continues, though their work is little attended to. Mr. Milner, late Vicar of Chipping, in Lancashire, was one of them."

Itinerant preaching (without referring to the obvious fact, that the first preachers of Christianity in any country must necessarily have been itinerant) is of a much earlier origin than Wesley has here supposed. It was the especial business of the Dominicans, and was practised by the other mendicant orders, and by the Jesuits. And it was practised long before the institution of these orders.

St. Cuthbert used to itinerate when he was abbot of Melrose, as his predecessor St. Boisil had done before him; and Bede tells us, that all persons eagerly flocked to listen to these preachers. "*Nec solum ipsi monasterio regularis vitæ monita, simul & exempla præbebat; sed et vulgus circumpositum longè latèque a vitâ stultæ consuetudinis ad cælestium gaudiorum convertere curabat amorem. Nam et multi fidem quam habebant, iniquis profanabant operibus; et aliqui etiam tempore mortalitatis neglectis fidei sacramentis (quibus erant imbuti) ad erratica idololatriæ medicamina concurrebant, quasi missam a Deo conditore plagam, per incantationes, vel*

philacteria, vel alia quælibet dæmoniacæ artis arcana, cohibere valerent. Ad utrorumque ergo corrigendum errorem, crebro ipse de monasterio egressus, aliquotiens equo sedens, sed sæpius pedibus incedens, circumpositas veniebat ad villas, et viam veritatis prædicabat errantibus; quod ipsum etiam Boisil suo tempore facere consueverat. Erat quippe moris eo tempore populis Anglorum, ut veniente in villam clerico vel presbytero, cuncti ad ejus imperium, verbum audituri confluerent, libenter ea quæ dicerentur audirent, libentius ea quæ audire et intelligere poterant operando sequerentur.—Solebat autem ea maxime loca peragrare, et illis prædicare in viculis, qui in arduis asperisque montibus procul positi, aliis horrori erant ad visendum, et paupertate pariter ac rusticitate suâ doctorum prohibebant accessum: quos tamen ille, pio libenter mancipatus labori, tantâ doctrinæ excolebat industriâ, ut de monasterio egrediens, sæpe hebdomadâ integrâ, aliquando duabus vel tribus, nonnunquam etiam mense pleno domum non rediret: sed demoratus in montanis, plebem rusticam verbo prædicationis simul et exemplo virtutis ad cælestia vocaret."

Beda, l. 4. c. 27.

St. Chad used to itinerate on foot. "*Consecratus ergo in episcopatum Ceadda, maximam mox cœpit Ecclesiasticæ veritati et castitati curam impendere; humilitati, continentiæ, lectioni operam dare; oppida, rura, casas, vicos, castella, propter evangelizandum non equitando, sed Apostolorum more pedibus incedendo peragrare.*" (Beda, l. 3. c. 28.) In this he followed the example of his master Aidan, till the primate compelled him to ride: "*Et quia moris erat eidem reverendissimo antistiti opus Evangelii magis ambulando per loca, quam equitando perficere, jussit eum Theodorus, ubicunque longius iter instaret, equitare; multumque renitentem studio et amore pii laboris, ipse eum manu sua levavit in equum; quia nimirum sanctum virum esse comperit, atque equo vehi quo esset necesse, compulit.*—Beda, l. 4. c. 3.

NOTE XVII. Page 214.

The Select Bands.

"The utility of these meetings appears from the following considerations. St. John divides the followers of God into three classes, (1 St. John, ii. 12.) St. Paul exhorts ministers to give every one his portion of meat in due season. And there were some things which our Lord did not make known to his disciples till after his ascension, when they were prepared for them by the descent of the Holy Ghost. These meetings give the preachers an opportunity of speaking of the deep things of God, and of exhorting the members to press after the full image of God. They also form a bulwark to the doctrine of Christian perfection. It is a pity that so few of the people embrace this privilege, and that every preacher does not warmly espouse such profitable meetings."—*Myles's Chronological History of the Methodists*, p. 34.

The following letter upon this subject (transcribed from the original, which was written by Mr. Wesley a few weeks only before his death) shows how easily a select society was disturbed by puzzling questions concerning the perfection which the members professed.

"*To Mr. Edward Lewly, Birmingham.*

"My Dear Brother, London, Jan. 12, 1791.

"I DO not believe a single person in your select society scruples saying,

Every moment Lord I need
The merit of thy death.

This is clearly determined in the "Thoughts upon Perfection." But who expects common people to speak accurately? And how easy is it to entangle them in their talk! I am afraid *some* have done this already. A man that is not a thorough friend to Christian Perfection will easily puzzle others, and thereby weaken, if not destroy, any select society. I doubt this has been the case with you. That

society was in a lively state, and well united together, when I was last at Birmingham. My health has been better for a few days than it has been for several months. Peace be with all your spirits. I am your affectionate Brother,

" J. WESLEY."

NOTE XVIII. Page 221.

Psalmody.

" ABOUT this time, David's Psalms were translated into English metre, and (if not publicly commanded) generally permitted to be sung in all churches. The work was performed by Thomas Sternhold, (an Hampshire man, esquire, and of the privy-chamber to King Edward the Sixth, who for his part translated thirty-seven selected psalms,) John Hopkins, Robert Wisedome, &c., men, whose piety was better than their poetry; and they had drank more of Jordan than of Helicon. These Psalms were therefore translated to make them more portable in people's memories, (verses being twice as light as the self-same bulk in prose,) as also to raise men's affections, the better to enable them to practise the 'Apostle's precept, 'Is any merry? let him sing psalms.' Yet this work met afterwards with some frowns in the faces of great clergymen, who were rather contented, than well pleased, with the singing of them in churches. I will not say, because they misliked so much liberty should be allowed the laity (Rome only can be guilty of so great envy) as to sing in churches: rather, because they conceived these singing-psalms erected in conviviality and opposition to the reading-psalms, which were formerly sung in cathedral churches; or else, the child was disliked for the mother's sake; because, such translators, though branched hither, had their root in Geneva.

Since, later men have vented their just exceptions against the baldness of the translation, so that sometimes they make the Maker of the tongue to speak little better than barbarism;

and have in many verses such poor rhime, that two hammers on a smith's anvil would make better music. Whilst others (rather to excuse it, than defend it) do plead, that English poetry was then in the non-age, not to say, infancy thereof; and that, match these verses for their age, they shall go abreast with the best poems of those times. Some, in favour of the translators, allege, that to be curious therein, and over-descanting with wit, had not become the plain song, and simplicity of an holy style. But these must know, there is great difference between painting a face and not washing it. Many since have far refined these translations, but yet their labours therein never generally received in the church; principally, because un-book-learned people have conned by heart, many psalms of the old translation, which would be wholly disinherited of their patrimony, if a new edition were set forth. However, it is desired, and expected by moderate men, that, though the fabric stand unremoved for the main, yet some bad contrivance therein may be mended, and the bald rhimes in some places get a new nap, which would not much discompose the memory of the people."—*Fuller's Church History*, Cent. XVI., book vii. p. 406.

In a letter of Jewel's, written in 1560, he says, "that a change appeared now more visible among the people. Nothing promoted it more than the inviting the people to sing psalms. That was begun in one church in London, and did quickly spread itself, not only through the city, but in the neighbouring places. Sometimes at Paul's Cross there will be six thousand people singing together. This was very grievous to the Papists."—*Burnet's Reformation*, part iii. p. 290.

"There are two things," says Wesley, "in all modern pieces of music, which I could never reconcile to common sense. One is, singing the same words ten times over; the other, singing different words by different persons, at one and the same time; and this in the most solemn addresses to God, whether by way of prayer or of thanks-

giving. This can never be defended by all the musicians in Europe, till reason is quite out of date."— *Journal*, xiii. p. 56.

And again, officiating in the church at Neath, he says: "I was greatly disgusted at the *manner* of singing. First, Twelve or fourteen persons kept it to themselves and quite shut out the congregation. Secondly, These repeated the same words, contrary to all sense and reason, six, eight, or ten times over. Thirdly, According to the shocking custom of modern music, different persons sung different words at one and the same moment—an intolerable insult on common sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion."— *Journal*, xv. p. 24.

"From the first and apostolical age, singing was always a part of divine service, in which the whole body of the church joined together; which is a thing so evident, that though Cabassutius denies it, and in his spite to the reformed churches, where it is generally practised, calls it only a protestant whim; yet Cardinal Bona has more than once not only confessed, but solidly proved it to have been the primitive practice. The decay of this first brought the order of *psalmistæ* or singers into the church. For when it was found by experience, that the negligence and unskilfulness of the people rendered them unfit to perform this service, without some more curious and skilful to guide and assist them, then a peculiar order of men were appointed and set over this business, with a design to retrieve and improve the ancient psalmody, and not to abolish or destroy it."—*Bingham*, b. iii. c. 7. § 2.

Whitefield was censured once for having some of his hymns set to profane music, and he is said to have replied, "Would you have the devil keep all the good tunes to himself?"

NOTE XIX. Page 223.

Service of the Methodists.

Mr. Wesley prided himself upon the decency of worship in his chapels. He says: "The longer I am absent from

London, and the more I attend the service of the church in other places, the more I am convinced of the unspeakable advantage which the people called Methodists enjoy. I mean, even with regard to public worship, particularly on the Lord's Day. The church where they assemble is not gay or splendid; which might be an hindrance on the one hand: nor sordid or dirty, which might give distaste on the other; but plain as well as clean. The persons who assemble there are not a gay, giddy crowd, who come chiefly to see and be seen; nor a company of goodly, formal, outside Christians, whose religion lies in a dull round of duties; but a people, most of whom know, and the rest earnestly seek to worship God in spirit and in truth. Accordingly, they do not spend their time there in bowing and curtseying, or in staring about them: but in looking upward and looking inward, in hearkening to the voice of God, and pouring out their hearts before him.

"It is also no small advantage that the person who reads prayers (though not always the same) yet is always one, who may be supposed to speak from his heart; one whose life is no reproach to his profession; and one who performs that solemn part of divine service, not in a careless, hurrying, slovenly manner, but seriously and slowly, as becomes him who is transacting so high an affair between God and man.

"Nor are their solemn addresses to God interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither feel nor understand, or the unreasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit, and with the understanding also: not in the miserable, scandalous doggrel of Hopkins and Sternhold, but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry: such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic. What they sing is therefore a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service; being selected for that end, (not by a poor hum-drum wretch, who can scarce

read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but, by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service: nor does he take just 'two staves,' but more or less as may best raise the soul to God, especially when sung in well-composed and well-adapted tunes; not by a handful of wild unawakened striplings, but by a whole serious congregation; and then not lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another, but all standing before God, and praising him lustily, and with a good courage."

NOTE XX. Page 238.

Strong feelings expressed with levity.

FULLER relates a remarkable example of this:—"When worthy master Samuel Hern, famous for his living, preaching, and writing, lay on his death bed, (rich only in goodness and children,) his wife made much womanish lamentation what should hereafter become of her little ones. 'Peace, sweet-heart,' said he; 'that God who feedeth the ravens will not starve the Herns.' A speech, censured as light by some, observed by others as prophetical, as indeed it came to pass that they were well disposed of."—*Fuller's Good Thoughts.*

NOTE XXI. Page 255.

Methodism in Scotland.

THE Methodists thus explain the cause of their failure in that country:—"There certainly is a very wide difference between the people of Scotland, and the inhabitants of England. The former have, from their earliest years, been accustomed to hear the leading truths of the Gospel, mixed with Calvinism, constantly preached, so that the truths are become quite familiar to them; but, in general, they know little or nothing of Christian experience; and

genuine religion, or the *life* and *power* of godliness, is in a very low state in that country. I am fully satisfied that it requires a far higher degree of the Divine influence, generally speaking, to awaken a Scotchman out of the dead sleep of sin, than an Englishman. So greatly are they bigoted to their own opinions, their mode of church government, and way of worship, that it does not appear probable, that our preachers will ever be of much use to that people: and, in my opinion, except those who are sent to Scotland exceed their own ministers in heart-searching, experimental preaching, closely applying the truth to the consciences of the hearers, they may as well never go thither." — *Pawson.*

NOTE XXII. Page 258.

Effects of the Reformation upon Ireland.

"IRELAND, and especiallie the ruder part, is not stored with such learned men as Germanie is. If they had sound preachers, and sincere livers, that by the imbalming of their carian soules with the sweet and sacred flowers of holie writ, would instruct them in the feare of God, in obeieng their princes, in observing the lawes, in underpropping in ech man his vocation the weale publike; I doubt not but, within two or three ages, M. Critabolus his heires should heare so good a report run of the reformation of Ireland, as it would be reckoned as civill as the best part of Germanie. Let the soile be as fertile and betle as anie would wish, yet if the husbandman will not manure it, sometime plow and eare it, sometime harrow it, sometime till it, sometime marle it, sometime delve it, sometime dig it, and sow it with good and sound corne, it will bring foorth weeds, bind-corne, cockle, darnell, brambles, briers, and sundrie wild shoots. So it fareth with the rude inhabitants of Ireland; they lacke universities; they want instructors; they are destitute of teachers; they are without preachers; they are devoid of all such necessaries as apperteine to the training up of youth: and, notwithstand-

ing all these wants, if anie would be so frowardlie set as to require them to use such civilitie, as other regions, that are sufficientlie furnished with the like helps, he might be accounted as unreasonable as he that would force a creeple that lacketh both his legs to run, or one to pipe or whistle a galiard that wanteth his upper lip." — *Stanihurst, in Holinshed's Chronicles*, vol. vi. p. 14.

The ecclesiastical state of Ireland in 1576, is thus described by John Vowell *alias* Hooker, the Chronicler: — "The temples all ruined, the parish-churches, for the most part, without curates and pastors, no service said, no God honoured, nor Christ preached, nor sacraments ministered: many were born which never were christened: the patrimony of the church wasted, and the lands embezzled. A lamentable case, for a more deformed and a more overthrown Church there could not be among Christians." — *Holinshed's Chronicles*, vol. vi. p. 382.

"The Kernes, or natural wild Irish, (and many of the better sort of the nation also,) either adhere unto the Pope, or their own superstitious fancies, as in former times. And, to say truth, it is no wonder that they should, there being no care taken to instruct them in the Protestant religion, either by translating the Bible, or the English Liturgy, into their own language, as was done in Wales; but forcing them to come to church to the English service, which the people understand no more than they do the mass. By means whereof, the Irish are not only kept in continual ignorance, as to the doctrine and devotions of the Church of England, and others of the Protestant churches, but those of Rome are furnished with an excellent argument for having the service of the church in a language which the common hearers do not understand. And, therefore, I do heartily commend it to the care of the State (when these distempers are composed) to provide that they may have the Bible, and all other public means of Christian instruction, in their natural tongue." — *Heylyn's Cosmography*, p. 341.

I transcribe from the "Letters of Yorick," (Dublin,

1817.) this "description of a parish in the county of Waterford:" — "Kilbarry is a lay impropriation. Mr. Fox, of Bramham Hall, Yorkshire, the patron and proprietor, maintains no curate, nor any other service than that of the occasional duties, for which he allows 3l. 16s. 3d. per annum. The lands are set tithe-free. There is but one Protestant family in the parish, Mr. Carew's, of Ballinamona. The church is in ruins, but is accommodated with a churchyard."

NOTE XXIII. Page 248.

Wesley's political Conduct.

In a letter written in 1782, Mr. Wesley says, "Two or three years ago, when the kingdom was in imminent danger, I made an offer to the Government of raising some men. The Secretary of War, by the King's order, wrote me word 'that it was not necessary: but if it ever should be necessary, His Majesty would let me know.' I never renewed the offer, and never intended it. But Captain Webb, without my knowing any thing of the matter, went to Colonel B. the new Secretary of War, and renewed that offer. The Colonel (I verily believe to avoid his importunity) asked him 'how many men he could raise?' But the Colonel is out of place; so the thing is at an end."

NOTE XXIV. Page 303.

Wesley's Separation from his Wife.

The separation between Mr. and Mrs. Wesley is represented by all his biographers as final. Yet, in his journal for the ensuing year, 1772, she is mentioned as travelling with him: "Tuesday, June 30. Calling at a little inn on the moors, I spoke a few words to an old man there, as my wife did to the woman of the house. They both appeared to be deeply affected. Perhaps Providence sent us to this house for the sake of those two poor souls."

NOTE XXV. Page 362.

Trevecca.

THE following curious account of a society instituted partly in imitation of Lady Huntingdon's College, is taken from the preface to a tract entitled "The Pre-existence of Souls, and Universal Restitution considered as Scripture Doctrines. Extracted from the Minutes and Correspondence of Burnham Society." Taunton, 1798. The editor was a singular person, whose name was Locke. Mr. Wesley used to preach in the Society's room in the course of his travelling; and Mr. Fletcher, John Henderson, Sir Richard Hill, and the Rev. Sir George Stonhouse were among the corresponding members.

"The small college, or rather large school, established at Trevecca, in Wales, for the maintenance and education of pious young men, of different religious * sentiments, suggested the idea of constituting a religious society at *Burnham*, in the county of *Somerset*, upon a similar plan, with regard to the difference of opinion. It was intended to ensure to its members not only all the advantages enjoyed by common benefit-clubs, from their weekly contributions, but to raise a fund sufficient to enable those who attended the monthly meetings to enjoy all the pleasures of one of Addison's *Social Convivial Societies*, subject, however, to a heavy fine for drinking to excess, because the entertainment was to be conducted upon the principles of a primitive *Love-Feast*, which was to enjoy all things in *common*.

"As the first or chief business of this society was to study philosophy and polemic divinity, and debate on the difference of religious opinions, in brotherly love; so ancient

* Lady Huntingdon, the founder, leaned to the Supralapsarians; the Rev. Walter Shirley, the president, to the Sublapsarians; the Rev. John Fletcher, the superintendent master, defended the Arminian tenets of John Wesley; and John Henderson, teacher of the higher classics, was an Universalist, after Stonhouse.

and modern controversy was to be introduced, and, of course, candidates, of any religious denomination, admitted as members of this philosophical society. But in order that religious controversy should not operate as a check upon the general good humour of the members, all personal reflections or invectives, tart or sour expressions, harsh severe speeches, with every other impropriety of conduct, either by word, look, or gesture, contrary to patience, meekness, and humility, were punishable by fines and penalties; and for non-compliance, the delinquents were either to be sent to Coventry, or excluded.

"The resolution entered into of living in brotherly love, in the same manner as we conceive angels would live, were they to sojourn with men, and the liberal and rational plan upon which this society was founded, gathered to it upwards of five hundred members; upon which a resolution was made, that no speaker should harangue more than five minutes at one time, supposing any other member arose to speak. Hence arose the necessity for disputants to conclude their debates in writing, with references to authors, who had written upon the subject, in order for the society to deliver their opinions upon the question under consideration.

"These debates, papers, and references to books, disclosed to the members (as their minds became more and more enlightened) a variety of indirect roads and byepaths, in the exploring of which they lost themselves; for, however firmly they were united in acts of brotherly conformity in the service of one common Lord, they gradually returned to their old customs — some to the worship of their *family gods* — a few to the service of their *own gods* — others paid obedience to an *unknown god* — but most neglected the service of *every god*.

"This will account for the gradual desertion of members, and the apparent necessity of permitting this once famous society to degenerate into a mere benefit-club, which is now kept together by a freehold estate (of twenty pounds

per annum neat) purchased by the President from the surplus contributions of members."

"You formed a scheme," says Toplady to Mr. Wesley, "of collecting as many perfect ones as you could to live under one roof. A number of these flowers were accordingly transplanted, from some of your nursery beds, to the hot-house. And an hot-house it soon proved. For, would we believe it! the sinless people quarrelled in a short time at so violent a rate, that you found yourself forced to disband the whole regiment." — *Toplady's Works*, vol. v. p. 342.

Does this allude to the Burnham Society?

NOTE XXVI. Page 365.

Whitefield.

THE device upon Whitefield's seal was a winged heart soaring above the globe, and the motto *Astra petamus*. The seal appears to have been circular, and coarsely cut. A broken impression is upon an original letter of his in my possession, for which I am obliged to Mr. Laing, the bookseller, of Edinburgh.

Mr. William Mason writes from Newbury-Port, near Boston, to the Gospel Magazine, and contradicts "an account which was prevalent in London a few years past, and asserted with direct *possitivity* in the Evangelical Magazine;" namely, "that the body of the late Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, buried in this port, was entire and uncorrupted. From whence such a falsehood could have arisen it is impossible to decide. About five years past, (he writes in 1801,) a few friends were permitted to open the tomb wherein the remains of that precious servant of Christ were interred. After some difficulty in opening the coffin, we found the flesh totally consumed. The gown, cassock, and band, with which he was buried, were almost the same as if just put into the coffin. I mention this particular as a caution to Editors, especially of a religious work, to avoid the marvellous, particularly when there is no foundation for their assertions."

The report, though it was as readily accredited by many persons as the invention of a saint's body would be in a Catholic country, seems not to have originated in any intention to deceive. Some person writing from America, says, "One of the preachers told me the body of Mr. Whitefield was not yet putrified. But several other corpses are just in the same state at Newbury-Port, owing to vast quantities of nitre with which the earth there abounds."

Whitefield is said to have preached eighteen thousand sermons during the thirty-four years of his ministry. The calculation was made from a memorandum-book in which he noted down the times and places of his preaching. This would be something more than ten sermons a-week.

Wesley tells us himself (Journal, xiii. p. 121.) that he preached about eight hundred sermons in a year. In fifty-three years, reckoning from the time of his return from America, this would amount to forty-two thousand four hundred. But it must be remembered that even the *hundreds* in this sum were not written discourses.

Collier says, that, Dr. Litchfield, Rector of All Saints, Thames Street, London, who died in 1447, left three thousand and eighty-three sermons in his own hand.—*Eccl. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 187.

NOTE XXVII. Page 372.

Conference with the Calvinists.

"I was at Bristol," says Mr. Badcock, "when the Hon. Mr. Shirley, by the order of my Lady Huntingdon, called him (Mr. Wesley) to a public account for certain expressions which he had uttered in some charge to his clergy, which savoured too much of the Popish doctrine of the merit of good works. Various speculations were formed as to the manner in which Mr. Wesley would evade the charge. Few conjectured right; but all seemed to agree in one thing, and that was that he would some how or other baffle his antagonist: and baffle him he did; as Mr. Shirley afterwards confessed in a very lamentable pamphlet, which

he published on this redoubted controversy. In the crisis of the dispute, I heard a celebrated preacher, who was one of Whitefield's successors, express his suspicion of the event: for, says he, "I know him of old: he is an eel; take him where you will, he will slip through your fingers." — *Nichols's Anecdotes*, vol. v. p. 224.

NOTE XXVIII. Page 374.

Berridge of Everton.

THIS person (who was of Clare Hall) called himself a riding pedlar, because, he used to say, his master employed him to serve near forty shops in the country, besides his own parish.

If the Poems in the Gospel Magazine, with the signature of Old Everton, are his, as I suppose them to be, the following slanderous satire upon Mr. Wesley must be ascribed to him; for it comes evidently from the same hand: —

The Serpent and the Fox; or, an Interview between old Nick and old John.

There's a fox who resideth hard by,
The most perfect, and holy, and sly,
That e'er turn'd a coat, or could pilfer and lie.

As this reverend Reynard one day,
Sat thinking what game next to play,
Old Nick came a seas'nable visit to pay.

O, your servant, my friend, quoth the priest,
Tho' you carry the mark of the beast,
I never shook paws with a welcomer guest.

Many thanks, holy man, cry'd the fiend,
'Twas because you're my very good friend
That I dropt in, with you a few moments to spend.

JOHN.

Your kindness requited shall be;
There's the Calvinist-Methodists, see,
Who're eternally troublous to you and to me.

Now I'll stir up the hounds of the *whore*
That's call'd *scarlet*, to worry them sore,
And then roast 'em in Smithfield, like Bonner of yore.

NICK.

O, a meal of the Calvinist brood
Will do my old stomach more good,
Than a sheep to a wolf that is starving for food.

JOHN.

When America's conquer'd, you know,
('Till then we must leave them to crow,)
I'll work up our rulers to strike an home-blow.

NICK.

An excellent plan, could you do it;
But if all the infernals too knew it,
They'd be puzzled, like me, to tell how you'll go through it.

JOHN.

When they speak against vice in the Great,
I'll cry out, that they aim at the *State*,
And the Ministry, King, and the Parliament hate.

Thus I'll still act the part of a liar,
Persecution's blest spirit inspire,
And then "*Calmly Address*" 'em with faggot and fire.

NICK.

Ay, that's the right way, I know well:
But how *lies* with *perfection* can dwell,
Is a riddle, dear John, that would puzzle all hell.

JOHN.

Pish! you talk like a doating old elf;
Can't you see how it brings in the pelf;
And all things are lawful that serve a man's self.

As serpents, we ought to be wise:
Is not self-preservation a prize?
For this did not *Abram* the righteous tell lies?

NICK.

I perceive you are subtle, tho' small:
You have reason, and scripture, and all:
So stilted, you never can finally fall.

JOHN.

From the drift of your latter reflection,
I fear you maintain some connection
With the crocodile crew that believe in Election.

NICK.

By my troth, I abhor the whole troop;
With those heroes I never could cope:
I should chuckle to see 'em all swing in a rope.

JOHN.

Ah, could we but set the land free
From those bawlers about the *Decree*,
Who're such torments to you, to my brother, and me!

As for *Whitefield*, I know it right well,
He has sent down his thousands to hell;
And, for aught that I know, he's gone with 'em to dwell.

NICK.

I grant, my friend John, for 'tis true,
That he was not so *perfect* as you;
Yet (confound him!) I lost him, for all I could do.

JOHN.

Take comfort! he's not gone to glory;
Or, at most, not above the *first* story:
For none but the *perfect* escape purgatory.

At best, he's in *limbo*, I'm sure,
And must still a long purging endure,
Ere, like me, he's made sinless, quite holy, and pure.

NICK.

Such purging my Johnny needs none;
By your own mighty works it is done,
And the kingdom of glory your *merit* has won.

Thus wrapt in your self-righteous plod,
And self-raised when you throw off this clod,
You shall mount, and demand your own seat, like a *god*.

You shall not in paradise wait,
But climb the *third* story with state;
While your *Whitefields* and *Hills* are turn'd back from the gate.

Old John never dreamt that he jeer'd;
So Nick turn'd himself round, and he sneer'd,
And then shrugg'd up his shoulders, and strait disappeared.

The priest, with a simpering face,
Shook his hair-locks, and paus'd for a space;
Then sat down to forge lies with his usual grimace.

AUSCULTATOR.

NOTE XXVIII. Page 375.

Calvinism.

"SOME pestilent and abominable heretics there be," says the Catholic Bishop Watson, "that, for excusing of themselves, do accuse Almighty God, and impute their mischievous deeds to God's predestination; and would persuade that God, who is the fountain of all goodness, were the author of all mischief; not only suffering men to do evil by their own wills, but also inforcing their wills to the same evil, and working the same evil in them. I will not now spend this little time (for it was near the end of his sermon) in confuting their pestilent and devilish sayings, *for it is better to abhor them than to confute them.*"—*Holsome and Catholyke Doctryne*, p. 124. 1558.

Dr. Beaumont has two good stanzas upon this subject in his Psyche, which is one of the most extraordinary poems in this or in any other language.

O no! may those black mouths for ever be
Damn'd up with silence and with shame, which dare
Father the foulest, deepest tyranny
On Love's great God; and needs will make it clear
From his own Word! thus rendering him at once
Both Cruelty's and Contradiction's Prince.

A prince whose mocking law forbids, what yet
Is his eternally-resolved will;
Who woos and tantalizes souls to get
Up into heaven, yet destines them to hell;
Who calls them forth whom he keeps locked in;
Who damns the sinner, yet ordains the sin.

Canto 10. st. 71, 72.

In the Arminian Magazine, Wesley has published the Examination of Tilenus before the Triers, in order to his intended settlement in the office of a public preacher in the Commonwealth of Eutopia; written by one who was present at the Synod of Dort. The names of the Triers are very much in John Bunyan's style. They are—Dr. Absolute, Chairman, Mr. Fatality, Mr. Præterition, Mr. Fry-babe, Dr. Damn-man, Mr. Narrow Grace, Mr. Efficax, Mr. Indefectible, Dr. Confidence, Dr. Dubious, Mr. Meanwell, Mr. Simulans, Mr. Take-o'Trust, Mr. Know-little, and Mr. Impertinent.

If the Abbé Duvernet may be trusted, (a writer alike liable to suspicion for his ignorance and his immorality,) Jansenius formally asserts in his *Augustinus*, that there are certain commandments which it is impossible to obey, and that Christ did not die for all. He refers to the Paris edition, vol. iii. pp. 138. 165.

NOTE XXX. Page 382.

Fletcher's Illustrations of Calvinism.

"I SUPPOSE you are still upon your travels. You come to the borders of a great empire, and the first thing that strikes you, is a man in an easy carriage going with folded arms to take possession of an immense estate, freely given him by the king of the country. As he flies along, you just make out the motto of the royal chariot in which he dozes,—'Free Reward.' Soon after, you meet five of the king's carts, containing twenty wretches loaded with irons; and the motto of every cart is, 'Free Punishment.' You inquire into the meaning of this extraordinary procession, and the sheriff attending the execution answers: Know, curious stranger, that our monarch is *absolute*; and to show that *sovereignty* is the prerogative of his imperial crown, and that he is *no respecter of persons*, he distributes every day *free rewards and free punishments*, to a certain number

of his subjects. 'What! without any regard to merit or demerit, by mere caprice?' Not altogether so; for he *pitches upon the worst of men, and chief of sinners, and upon such to choose*, for the subjects of his rewards. (Elisha Coles, p. 62.) And that his punishments may do as much honour to *free* sovereign *wrath*, as his bounty does to *free* sovereign *grace*, he pitches upon those that shall be executed before they are born. 'What! have these poor creatures in chains done no harm?' 'O yes,' says the sheriff, 'the king contrived that their parents should let them fall, and break their legs, before they had any knowledge; when they came to years of discretion, he commanded them to run a race with broken legs, and because they cannot do it, I am going to see them quartered. Some of them, besides this, have been obliged to fulfil the king's *secret will*, and *bring about his purposes*; and they shall be burned in yonder deep valley, called *Tophet*, for their trouble.' You are shocked at the sheriff's account, and begin to expostulate with him about the *freeness* of the *wrath* which burns a man for doing the king's will; but all the answer you can get from him is, that which you give me in your fourth letter, page 23, where, speaking of a poor reprobate, you say, 'such an one is indeed accomplishing the king's,' you say, 'God's decree;' but he carries a dreadful mark in his forehead, that such a decree is, that he shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord of the country. You cry out, 'God deliver me from the hands of a monarch, who *punishes with everlasting destruction* such as accomplish his decree!' and while the magistrate intimates that your exclamation is a *dreadful mark*, if not in your *forehead*, at least upon your *tongue*, that you yourself shall be apprehended against the next execution, and made a public instance of the king's free wrath; your blood runs cold; you bid the postilion turn the horses; they gallop for your life; and the moment you get out of the dreary land, you bless God for your narrow escape."—*Fletcher's Works*, vol. iii. p. 26.

"You 'decry illustrations,' and I do not wonder at it; for they carry light into Babel, where it is not desired. The father of errors begets *Darkness* and *Confusion*. From Darkness and Confusion springs *Calvinism*, who, wrapping himself up in some garments, which he has stolen from the Truth, deceives the nations, and gets himself reverenced in a dark temple, as if he were the pure and free Gospel.

"To bring him to a *shameful* end, we need not stab him with the dagger of '*calumny*,' or put him upon the rack of *persecution*. Let him only be dragged out of his obscurity, and brought unmasked to open light, and the silent beams of truth will pierce him through! Light alone will torture him to death, as the meridian sun does a bird of night, that cannot fly from the gentle operation of its beams.

"May the following *illustration* dart at least one luminous beam into the profound darkness in which your venerable Diana delights to dwell! And may it show the Christian world, that we do not '*slander you*,' when we assert, you inadvertently destroy God's law, and cast the Redeemer's crown to the ground: and that when you say, 'in point of justification,' (and consequently of condemnation,) 'we have nothing to do with the law; we are under the law as a rule of life,' but not as a rule of judgment; you might as well say, 'we are under no law, and consequently no longer accountable for our actions.'

"'The king,' whom I will *suppose* is in love with your doctrines of *free-grace* and *free-wrath*, by the advice of a predestinarian council and parliament, issues out a *Gospel*-proclamation, directed 'to all his dear subjects, and *elect* people, the *English*.' By this evangelical manifesto they are informed, 'that in consequence of the Prince of Wales's meritorious intercession, and perfect obedience to the laws of England, all the penalties annexed to the breaking of those laws are now abolished with respect to *Englishmen*: that his majesty freely pardons all his subjects, who have been, are, or shall be guilty of adultery,

murder, or treason: that all their crimes 'past, present, and to come, are for ever and for ever cancelled:' that nevertheless, his loving subjects, who remain strangers to their privileges, shall still be served with sham-warrants according to law, and frightened out of their wits, till they have learned to plead, *they are Englishmen*, (i. e. *elect*:) and then, they shall also set at defiance all legalists; that is, all those who shall dare to deal with them according to law: and that, excepting the case of the above-mentioned *false* prosecution of his chosen people, none of them shall ever be molested for the breach of any law.

"By the same supreme authority it is likewise enacted, that all the laws shall continue in force against foreigners, (i. e. reprobates,) whom the King and the Prince hate with everlasting hatred, and to whom they have agreed never to show mercy: that accordingly they shall be prosecuted to the utmost rigour of every statute, till they are all hanged or burned out of the way: and that, supposing no personal offence can be proved against them, it shall be lawful to hang them in chains for the crime of one of their forefathers, to set forth the king's wonderful justice, display his glorious sovereignty, and make his chosen people relish the better their sweet distinguishing privileges as *Englishmen*.

"Moreover, his Majesty, who loves order and harmony, charges his loving subjects to consider still the statutes of England, which are in force against foreigners, as very good *rules of life*, for the English, which they shall do *well* to follow, but better to break; because every breach of those rules will *work for their good, and make them sing louder* the faithfulness of the king, the goodness of the prince, and the sweetness of this Gospel-proclamation."

"Again, as nothing is so displeasing to the king as *legality*, which he hates even more than extortion and whoredom; lest any of his dear people, who have acted the part of a strumpet, robber, murderer, or traitor, should, through the remains of their inbred corruption,

and ridiculous *legality*, mourn too deeply for breaking some of their *rules of life*, our gracious monarch solemnly assures them, that though he highly disapproves of adultery and murder, yet these breaches of *rules* are not worse in his sight than a wandering thought in speaking to him, or a moment's dulness in his service: that robbers, therefore, and traitors, adulterers, and murderers, who are free-born *Englishmen*, need not at all be uneasy about losing his royal favour; this being utterly impossible, because they always stand complete in the honesty, loyalty, chastity, and charity of the prince.

"Moreover, because the king changes not, whatever lengths the *English* go on in immorality, he will always look upon them as his *pleasant children*, *his dear people*, and men *after his own heart*; and that, on the other hand, whatsoever lengths foreigners go in pious morality, his gracious majesty is determined still to consider them as *hypocrites*, *vessels of wrath*, and *cursed children*, *for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever*; because he always views them completely guilty, and absolutely condemned in a certain *robe of unrighteousness*, woven thousands of years ago by one of their ancestors. This dreadful *sanbenito* his majesty hath thought fit to put upon them by imputation, and in it, it is his good pleasure that they shall hang in adamantine chains, or burn in fire unquenchable.

"Finally, as foreigners are dangerous people, and may stir up his majesty's subjects to rebellion, the *English* are informed, that if any one of them, were he to come over from Geneva itself, shall dare to insinuate, that his most gracious gospel-proclamation is not according to equity, morality and godliness, the first Englishman that meets him, shall have full leave to brand him as a papist, without judge or jury, in the forehead or on the back, as he thinks best; and that, till he is farther proceeded with according to the utmost severity of the law, the chosen people shall be informed, in the *Gospel Magazine*, to beware of him, as a man 'who scatters firebrands, arrows, and deaths,'

and *makes universal havoc of every* article of this sweet gospel-proclamation. Given at Geneva, and signed by four of his majesty's principal secretaries of state for the predestinarian department."

JOHN CALVIN, DR. CRISP,
The Author of P. O. ROWLAND HILL.

Fletcher's Works, Vol. iii. page 282.

NOTE XXXI. Page 383.

Arminianism described by the Calvinists.

"SCARCE had our first parents made their appearance, when Satan, the *first Arminian*, began to preach the pernicious doctrine of free-will to them; which so pleased the old gentleman and his lady, that they (like thousands of their foolish offspring in this our day) adhered to the deceitful news, embraced it cordially, disobeyed the command of their Maker; and by so doing, launched their whole posterity into a cloud of miseries and ills. But some perhaps will be ready to say that Arminianism, though an error, cannot be the root of all other errors; to which I answer, that if it first originated in Satan, then I ask, from whence springs any error or evil in the world? Surely Satan must be the first moving cause of all evils that ever did, do now, or ever will, make their appearance in this world: consequently he was the first propagator of that cursed doctrine above-mentioned. Hence Arminianism begat Popery, and Popery begat Methodism, and Methodism begat Moderate Calvinism, and Moderate Calvinism begat Baxterianism, and Baxterianism begat Unitarianism, and Unitarianism begat Arianism, and Arianism begat Universalism, and Universalism begat Deism, and Deism begat Atheism; and living and dying in the embracement of every of the above *evils* or *isms*, where Christ is, they never can come. Thus I consider that Arminianism is the original of all the pernicious doctrines that are propa-

gated in the world, and Destructionism will close the whole of them." — *Gospel Magazine*, 1807, p. 16.

"Of the two (says Huntington the S. S.) I would rather be a Deist than an Arminian; for an established Deist sears his own conscience, so that he goes to hell in the easy chair of insensibility; but the Arminian, who wages war with open eyes against the sovereignty of God, fights most of his battles in the very fears and horrors of hell." — *Huntington's Works*, vol. i. p. 363.

"The sons of bondage," says a red-hot Antinomian, who signs himself Rufus, "like Satan and his compeers, are unsatisfied with slavery themselves, unless they can entice others into the same dilemma. They are for ever forging their accursed fetters for the sons of God in the hot flames of Sinai's fiery vengeance; and in the hypocritical age of the nineteenth century, pour forth whole troops of work-mongers, commonly known by the name of *Moderate Calvinists*, who, under an incredible profession of sanctity, lie in wait to deceive; and by their much fair speeches entrap the unwary pilgrims into the domains of Doubting castle, binding them within those solitary ruins to the legal drudgery of embracing the moral or preceptive law, as the rule of their lives."

Upon the subject of election, there is a tremendous rant by a writer who calls himself Ebenezer.

"Before sin can destroy any one of God's elect, it must change the word of truth into a lie — strip Jesus Christ of all his merit — render his blood inefficacious — pollute his righteousness — contaminate his nature — conquer his omnipotence — cast him from his throne — and sink him in the abyss of perdition; it must turn the love of God into hatred — nullify the council of the Most High — destroy the everlasting covenant — and make void the oath of Jehovah — nay, it must raise discord amongst the divine attributes — make Father, Son, and Spirit, unfaithful to each other, and set them at variance — change the divine nature — wrest the sceptre from the hand of the Almighty — dethrone him — and put a period to his existence. Till

it has done all this, we boldly say unto the redeemed, fear not, for we shall not be ashamed; neither be dismayed, for you shall not be confounded." — *Gospel Magazine*, 1804. p. 287.

NOTE XXXII. Page 401.

Young Grimshaw.

"He too," says Mr. Wesley, "is now gone into eternity! So, in a few years, the family is extinct. I preached in a meadow, near the house, to a numerous congregation; and we sang with one heart —

Let sickness blast and death devour,
If Heaven will recompense our pains;
Perish the grass, and fade the flower,
Since firm the word of God remains.

NOTE XXXIII. Page 421.

Wesley's Doctrine concerning Riches.

Upon this subject Mr. Wesley has preserved a fine anecdote. "Beware," he says "of forming a hasty judgment concerning the fortune of others. There may be secrets in the situation of a person, which few but God are acquainted with. Some years since, I told a gentleman, Sir, I am afraid you are covetous. He asked me, What is the reason of your fears? I answered, A year ago, when I made a collection for the expense of repairing the Foundery, you subscribed five guineas. At the subscription made this year you subscribed only half-a-guinea. He made no reply; but after a time asked, Pray, Sir, answer me a question: — why do you live upon potatoes, (I did so between three and four years.) I replied, It has much conduced to my health. He answered, I believe it has. But did you not do it likewise to save money. I said, I did, for what I save from my own meat, will feed another that else would have none. But, Sir, said he, if

this be your motive, you may save much more. I know a man that goes to the market at the beginning of every week. There he buys a pennyworth of parsnips, which he boils in a large quantity of water. The parsnips serve him for food, and the water for drink the ensuing week, so his meat and drink together cost him only a penny a week. This he constantly did, though he had then two hundred pounds a year, to pay the debts which he had contracted, before he knew God! — And this was he, whom I had set down for a covetous man."

To this affecting anecdote I add an extract from Wesley's Journal, relating to the subject of property.

"In the evening one sat behind me in the pulpit at Bristol, who was one of our first masters at Kingswood. A little after he left the school, he likewise left the society. Riches then flowed in upon him; with which, having no relations, Mr. Spencer designed to do much good — after his death. *But God said unto him, Thou fool!* Two hours after he died intestate, and left all his money to be scrambled for.

"Reader! if you have not done it already, *make your will before you sleep.*" — Journal, xix. 8.

I know a person, who upon reading this passage took the advice.

NOTE XXXIV. Page 512.

The Covenant.

If proof were wanting to confirm the opinion which I have advanced of the perilous tendency of this fanatical practice, William Huntington, S. S., a personage sufficiently notorious in his day, would be an unexceptionable evidence. He thus relates his own case, in his "Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer."

"Having got a little book that a person had lent me, which recommended vows to be made to God, I accordingly stripped myself naked, to make a vow to the Almighty, if he would enable me to cast myself upon him.

Thus I bound my soul with numerous ties, and wept over every part of the written covenant which this book contained. These I read naked on my knees, and vowed to perform all the conditions that were therein proposed. Having made this covenant, I went to bed, wept, and prayed the greatest part of that night, and arose in the morning pregnant with all the wretched resolutions of fallen nature. I now manfully engaged the world, the flesh, and the devil in my own strength; and I had bound myself up with so many promised conditions, that, if I failed in one point, I was gone for ever, according to the tenour of my own covenant, provided that God should deal with me according to my sins, and reward me according to mine iniquity.

"But, before the week was out, I broke through all these engagements, and fell deeper into the bowels of despair than ever I had been before. And now, seemingly, all was gone: I gave up prayer, and secretly wished to be in hell, that I might know the worst of it, and be delivered from the fear of worse to come. I was now again tempted to believe that there is no God, and wished to close in with the temptation, and be an established or confirmed atheist; for I knew, if there was a God, that I must be damned; therefore I laboured to credit the temptation, and fix it firm in my heart. But, alas! said I, how can I? If I credit this, I must disbelieve my own existence, and dispute myself out of common sense and feeling, for I am in hell already. There is no feeling in hell but what I have an earnest of. Hell is a place where mercy never comes: I have a sense of none. It is a separation from God: I am without God in the world. It is a hopeless state: I have no hope. It is to feel the burthen of sin: I am burthened as much as mortal can be. It is to feel the lashes of conscience: I feel them all the day long. It is to be a companion for devils; I am harassed with them from morning till night. It is to meditate distractedly on an endless eternity: I am already engaged in this. It is to sin and rebel against God: I do it perpetually. It

is to reflect upon past madness and folly: this is the daily employ of my mind. It is to labour under God's unmixed wrath: this I feel continually. It is to lie under the tormenting sceptre of everlasting death: this is already begun. Alas! to believe there is no God, is like persuading myself that I am in a state of annihilation."

Huntington's Works, vol. i. p. 193.

NOTE XXXV. Page 516.

The Value of a good Conscience.

Upon this subject the Methodist Magazine affords a good illustration. A poor Cornishman, John Nile by name, had been what is called under conviction twelve months, — in a deplorable state, walking disconsolate, while his brethren were enjoying their justification. One night, going into his fields, he detected one of his neighbours in the act of stealing his turnips, and brought the culprit quietly into the house with the sack which he had nearly filled. He made him empty the sack, to see if any of his seed turnips were there, and finding two or three large ones which he had intended to reserve for that purpose, he laid them aside, bade the man put the rest into the sack again, helped him to lay it on his back, and told him to take them home, and if at any time he was in distress, to come and ask and he should have; but he exhorted him to steal no more. Then shaking him by the hand, he said, I forgive you, and may God for Christ's sake do the same. What effect this had upon the thief is not stated; but John Nile was that night "filled with a clear evidence of pardoning love," with an assurance, "that having forgiven his brother his trespasses, his heavenly Father also had forgiven him."—Did the feeling proceed from his faith, or his good works?

"The Scriptures," says Priestley, "uniformly instruct us to judge of ourselves and others, not by uncertain and undescribable *feelings*, but by evident *actions*. As our

Saviour says, '*by their fruits shall ye know men.*'. For where a man's conduct is not only occasionally, but uniformly right, the principle upon which he acts must be good. Indeed the only reason why we value good principles, is on account of their uniform operation in producing good conduct. This is the *end*, and the principle is only the means."—*Preface to Original Letters by Wesley and his Friends.*

MR. WESLEY'S EPITAPHS.

ON THE TOMB-STONE.

To the Memory of
THE VENERABLE JOHN WESLEY, A. M.
Late Fellow of LINCOLN College, OXFORD.
This GREAT LIGHT arose
(By the singular Providence of God)
To enlighten THESE NATIONS,
And to *revive*, *enforce*, and *defend*,
The Pure, Apostolical DOCTRINES and PRACTICES of
THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH:
Which he continued to do, by his WRITINGS and his
LABOURS,
For more than HALF A CENTURY:
And, to his inexpressible Joy,
Not only beheld their INFLUENCE extending,
And their EFFICACY witnessed,
In the Hearts and Lives of MANY THOUSANDS,
As well in the WESTERN WORLD as in these
KINGDOMS:
But also, far above all human Power or Expectation,
Lived to see PROVISION made by the singular GRACE of
GOD
For their CONTINUANCE and ESTABLISHMENT,
TO THE JOY OF FUTURE GENERATIONS!
READER, if thou art constrained to bless the INSTRUMENT
GIVE GOD THE GLORY!

After having languished a few days, he at length finished his COURSE *and his* LIFE *together; gloriously triumphing over* DEATH, *March* 2. *An. Dom.* 1791, *in the Eighty-eighth Year Of his Age.*

IN THE CHAPEL.

Sacred to the Memory
Of the *Rev.* JOHN WESLEY, M. A.
Some time *Fellow of* LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD.
A Man, in Learning and sincere Piety,
Scarcely inferior to any:
In Zeal, Ministerial Labours, and extensive Usefulness,
Superior (perhaps) to all Men
Since the days of ST. PAUL.
Regardless of Fatigue, personal Danger, and Disgrace,
He went out into the highways and hedges,
Calling Sinners to Repentance,
And Preaching the GOSPEL of Peace.
He was the Founder of the *Methodist* Societies;
The Patron and *Friend* of the Lay-Preachers,
By whose aid he extended the Plan of Itinerant preaching
Through GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND,
The WEST INDIES and AMERICA,
With unexampled Success.
He was born June 17th, 1703,
And died March 2d, 1791,
In sure and certain hope of Eternal Life,
Through the Atonement and Mediation of a Crucified Saviour.
He was sixty-five Years in the *Ministry*,
And fifty-two an Itinerant Preacher:
He lived to see in these KINGDOMS only,
About three hundred Itinerant,
And a thousand *Local* Preachers,
Raised up from the midst of his own People;
And eighty thousand Persons in the Societies under his care.
His *Name* will ever be had in grateful Remembrance
by all who rejoice in the universal Spread
Of the Gospel of CHRIST.

Soli Deo Gloria.

Not long after Mr. Wesley's death a pamphlet was published, entitled, An Impartial Review of his Life and Writings. Two love-letters were inserted as having been written by him to a young lady in his eighty-first year; and, "to prevent all suspicion of their authenticity," the author declared that the original letters, in the handwriting of Mr. Wesley, were then in his possession, and

that they should be open to the inspection of any person who would call at a given place to examine them. "With this declaration," says Mr. Drew, "many were satisfied; but many who continued incredulous, actually called. Unfortunately, however, they always happened to call, either when the author was engaged, or when he was from home, or when these original letters were lent for the inspection of others! It so happened, that though they were always open to examination, they could never be seen." In the year 1801, however, the author, a Mr. J. Collet, wrote to Dr. Coke, confessing that he had written the letters himself, and that most of the pretended facts in the pamphlet were equally fictitious.

The Ex-Bishop Gregoire has inserted one of these forged letters in his History of the Religious Sects of the last Century. He reckons among the Methodists Mr. Wilberforce, who, he says, has defended the principles of Methodism in his writings, and *le poète Sir Richard Hill, Baronnet.* But the most amusing specimen of the Ex-Bishop's accuracy is, where enumerating among the controverted subjects of the last century, *La Reforme du Symbole Athanasien,* he adds, *a cette discussion se rattache la* Controverse Blagdonienne *entre le curé de Blagdon, près de Bristol, et Miss Hannah More.*

ADDITIONAL NOTES

CONCERNING MR. WESLEY'S FAMILY.

BARTHOLOMEW WESLEY is said to have been the fanatical minister of Charmouth, in Dorsetshire, who had nearly been the means of delivering Lord Wilmot and Charles II. to their enemies. Lord Clarendon's account, however, differs from this; he says that the man was a weaver, and had been a soldier: but Mr. Wesley had received an University education.

Samuel Wesley, the elder, was a student in a dissenting academy, kept by Mr. Veal, at Stepney; and, according to John Dunton, was "educated upon charity" there; an invidious expression, meaning nothing more than that the friends of his parents assisted in giving him an education which his mother could not have afforded. He distinguished himself there by his facility in versifying; and the year after his removal to Oxford, published a volume entitled, "Maggots, or poems on several subjects never before handled." A whimsical portrait of the anonymous author was prefixed, representing him writing at a table, crowned with laurel, and with a maggot on his forehead: underneath are these words: —

In's own defence the author writes,
Because when this foul maggot bites
He ne'er can rest in quiet,
Which makes him make so sad a face,
He'd beg your worship or your grace
Unsight, unseen to buy it.

It was by the profits of this work, and by composing elegies, epitaphs, and epithalamiums, for his friend John Dunton, who traded in these articles, and kept a stock by him ready made, that Mr. Wesley supported himself at Oxford: not as I have erroneously stated (after Dr. Whitehead) by what he earned in the University itself. "He usually wrote too fast," says Dunton, "to write well. Two hundred couplets a-day are too many by two-thirds to be well furnished with all the beauties and the graces of that art. He wrote very much for me both in prose and verse, though I shall not name over the titles, in regard I am altogether as unwilling to see my name at the bottom of them, as Mr. Wesley would be to subscribe his own."

Dunton and Wesley were brothers-in-law, and when the former wrote his "Life and Errors," they were not upon amicable terms. Dunton could not forgive him for having published a letter concerning the education of the Dissenters in their private academies. It appears, however, by his own account, that Mr. Wesley, little as he had to spare,

had lent him money in his distresses; and Dunton, even while he satirizes him, acknowledges that he was a generous, good-humoured, and pious man.

Mr. Nichols (Literary Anecdotes, vol. ii. p. 84.) says that Mr. Wesley's house was burnt twice. John, however, only says, that the villains several times attempted to burn it. He had made great progress in his laborious work upon the Book of Job, having collated all the copies he could meet with of the original, and the Greek and other versions and editions. All these labours were destroyed: but in the decline of life he resumed the task, though oppressed with gout and palsy through long habit of study. Among other assistances he particularly acknowledges that of his three sons, and his friend Maurice Johnson.

The book was printed at Mr. Bowyer's press. How much is it to be wished that the productions of all our great presses had been recorded with equal diligence!

The *Dissertationes in Librum Jobi*, I have never seen; but I learn from Mr. Nichols's Literary Anecdotes, (vol. v. p. 212.) that a curious emblematical portrait of the author is prefixed to the volume. It "represents Job in a chair of state, dressed in a robe bordered with fur, sitting beneath a gateway, on the arch of which is written JOB PATRIARCHA. He bears a sceptre in his hand, and in the back-ground are seen two of the Pyramids of Egypt. His position exactly corresponds with the idea given us by the Scriptures in the book of Job, chap. xxix. 7.: 'When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street:' according to the custom of those times of great men sitting at the gate of the city to decide causes. The subscription on a tablet beneath his feet, *An. ætat. circiter LXX. Quis mihi tribuat?* mark it out as the quaint device of a man in years who thought himself neglected."

Garth and Swift have mentioned Wesley with contempt: and Pope introduced him in the Dunciad, in company with Watts. Both names were erased in the subse-

quent editions. Pope felt ashamed of having spoken injuriously of such a man as Dr. Watts, who was entitled not only to high respect for his talents, but to admiration for his innocent and holy life: and he had become intimate with Samuel Wesley the younger. That excellent man exerted himself in every way to assist his father, when the latter had lost all hope of the preferment which he once had reason to expect.

"Time," says Mr. Badcock, "had so far gotten the better of his fury against Sir Robert, (Walpole,) as to change the satirist into the suppliant. I have seen a copy of verses addressed to the great Minister, in behalf of his poor and aged parent. But I have seen something much better. I have in my possession a letter of this *poor and aged parent*, addressed to his son Samuel, in which he gratefully acknowledges his filial duty in terms so affecting, that I am at a loss which to admire most, the gratitude of the parent, or the affection and generosity of the child. It was written when the good old man was nearly fourscore, and so weakened by a palsy as to be incapable of directing a pen, unless with his left hand. I preserve it as a curious memorial of what will make Wesley applauded when his wit is forgotten." *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. v. p. 220.

The only works of the elder Wesley which I have met with, are the two following, which were probably his most successful publications.

The History of the Old Testament in Verse, with one hundred and eighty Sculptures, in two volumes, dedicated to her most sacred Majesty. Vol. i. From the Creation to the Revolt of the Ten Tribes from the House of David. Vol. ii. From that Revolt to the End of the Prophets.—Written by Samuel Wesley, A.M. Chaplain to his Grace John, Duke of Buckingham and Marquis of Normanby, Author of the Life of Christ, an Heroic Poem. The Cuts done by J. Sturt. London: printed for Cha. Harper, at the Flower-de-luce, over against St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet-street. 1704. 12mo.

The History of the New Testament, representing the Actions and Miracles of our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles: attempted in Verse, and adorned with 152 Sculptures. Written by Samuel Wesley, A. M. Chaplain to the Most Honourable the Lord Marquis of Normanby, and Author of the Life of Christ, an Heroic Poem. The cuts done by J. Sturt. London: printed for Cha. Harper, at the Flower-de-luce, over-against St. Dunstan's Church, in Fleet-street. 1701. 12mo.

The elder Wesley had a clerk, who was a Whig, like his master, and a poet also, of a very original kind. "One Sunday, immediately after Sermon, he said, with an audible voice, Let us sing to the praise and glory of God, a hymn of my own composing. It was short and sweet, and ran thus;

King William is come home, come home,
King William home his come!
Therefore let us together sing
The hymn that's call'd Te D'um."

Wesley's Remarks on Mr. Hill's Farrago Double-distilled. Works, vol. xv. p. 109.

THE END.

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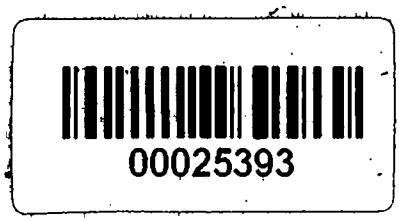
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